

This book summarizes work done on the graphics for *The Witcher* in the years 2002-2007. Initially consisting of three members, the art team expanded over time. Ultimately twenty people – all employed by CD Projekt Red – created the game visuals.

We drafted the artistic concept at the turn of 2002 and 2003. Familiar with Andrzej Sapkowski's prose, having a clear idea of how it should look in game form, we devised the overriding visual formula within a few weeks. *The Witcher* would draw on the 'dark fantasy' genre and the best available example of it – *Diablo 2*. This was consistent with our vision of a brutal and grimy game world that would afford little room for charming illusions. It had to be a thoroughly believable world, a convincing backdrop for the contemporary social problems that would play out within it.

We looked to historical sources to strengthen the credibility of our vision. I believed combining a 'dark fantasy' aesthetic with the realities of 15th and 16th century Europe would be our best option, so the architectural, costume, character, weapon and furniture designs reference late Medieval and early Renaissance trends.

Producing the right mood was ultimately more important than achieving historical accuracy. Rather than limiting ourselves to the late Middle Ages, we also incorporated elements from the late Renaissance (especially in its German and Dutch varieties), drew inspiration from Baroque paintings, the Dutch masters of the landscape and genre scene. Slavic culture also provided numerous aesthetic ideas.

The visuals would be a background for the postmodern world of Andrzej Sapkowski's novels. This in itself provided artistic freedom, the flexibility to blend different conventions with little restraint. Thus, like the author's books, the game contains many anachronisms.

The concepts and designs in this volume describe our process. Many ideas never made it into *The Witcher*, but without them certain game elements would not have arisen. This book is the sole outlet for presenting them.

I recommend the chapter about the two films Tomasz Bagiński produced. Providing a unique look at the differences between game and film production, it simultaneously notes the similarities between the two mediums.

I wish to thank all the art team members. *The Witcher*'s visuals are a product of their vast talents, enthusiasm, and dedication. I can't name everyone, but the following deserve special mention: Damian Bajowski, Patryk Brzozowski, Michał Buczkowski, Marian Chomiak, Piotrek Chomiak, Bartek Gaweł, Adam Kozłowski, Kamil Kozłowski, Adrian Madej, Paweł Mielniczuk, Seweryn Niedzielski, Tomek Polit, Dominik Redmer, Przemek Truściński, Lucjan Więcek, and Łukasz Ziobrowski.

Adam Badowski
Head of Art
The Witcher








Cintra
Attre
Hill
Loc Monduirn
Riedbrune
Slopes
Amell Mountains
Marnadal Stairs
Belhaven
Caed Myrkvid
Toussaint

WORLD MAP



Dragon Mountains
Narok
Cango
Velhad
Calgar
Malleore
Caingorn
Aedd Gynvael
Ban Exeter
Povis
Kovir
Pont Vanis
Hengfors
Kaedwen
Gwenllech
Gulf of Praxeda
Coast
Blaviken
Buine
Nimnar
Ghelibol
Ard Carraigh
Redania
Roggeven
Novigrad
Tretogor
Oxenfurt
Rinbe
Pontar
Ban Glean
Hagge
Temeria
Cidaris
Gors Velen
Vizima
Ellander
Ismena
Bremervoord
Kerack
Adalatte
Dorian
Carreas
Brokilon
Brenna
Mahakam Mountains
Mount Carbon
Maribor
Verden
Ribbon
Brugge
Mayena
Ina
Sodden
Rivia
Nastrog
Rozrog
Bodrog
Dillingen
Cintra
Yaruga
Riverdell
Sodden Hill
Loc Monduirn
Riedbrune
Slopes
Attre
Amell Mountains
Marnadal Stairs
Belhaven
Neva
Peixe De Mar
Sudduth Valley
Cheodula Pass
Mount Gorgon
Sansretour
Nazair
An Skellig
Ard Skellig
Skellige Islands
n
w
e
s
compiled by: Karol Kowalczyk
design and layout: Kamila Redmer
consulted with Andrzej Sapkowski



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Temeria



Rinde
Royal Castle
Vizima
Royal Quarter
Temple Quarter
Trade Quarter
Dike
Old Vizima
Ismena
Carreras
Swamp Cemetery
Crypt
Old Manor
Chapel of the Eternal Fire
Tavern
Outskirts
Maribor
Mage's Tower
Lake Vizima
Altar of Dagon
Black Tern Island
Swamp
Landing
Altar of the Lady
Lakeside
Chotla
Murky Waters
Village
Country Inn
Fields

The Northern Kingdoms
Kaer Morhen
Kaedwen
Redania
Vizima
Temeria
Aedirn

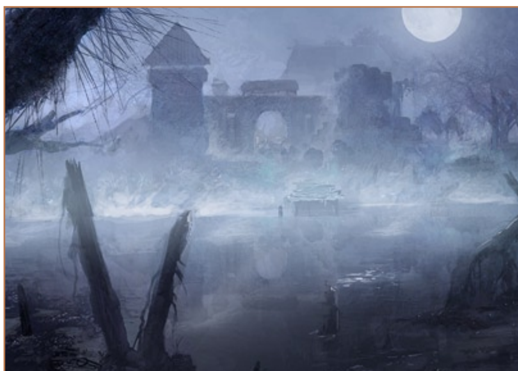
A. H. 2007

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LOCATIONS – INTRODUCTION

Before creating the game locations, we produced a series of conceptual sketches. Rather than depicting game settings in detail, the sketches in this section convey their general character and mood.























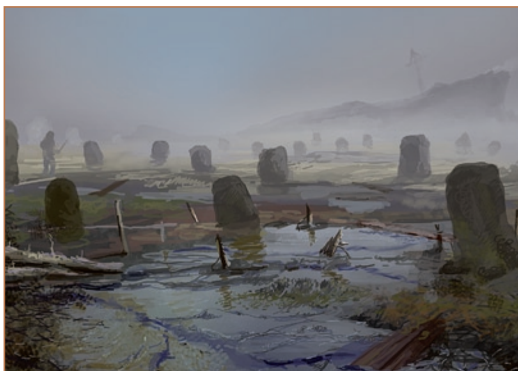




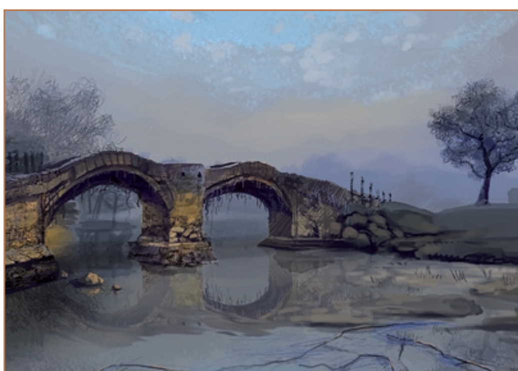






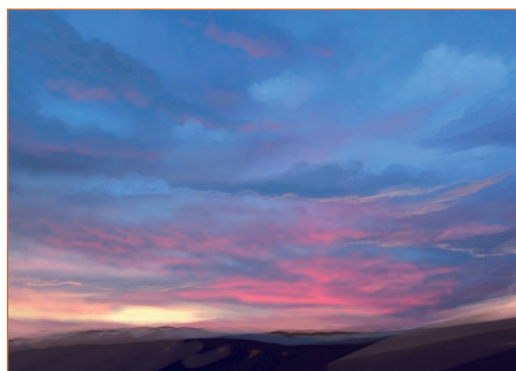


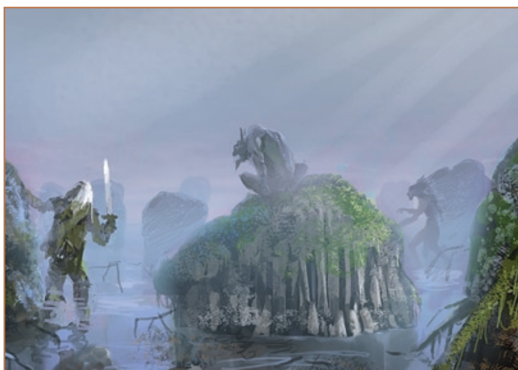


































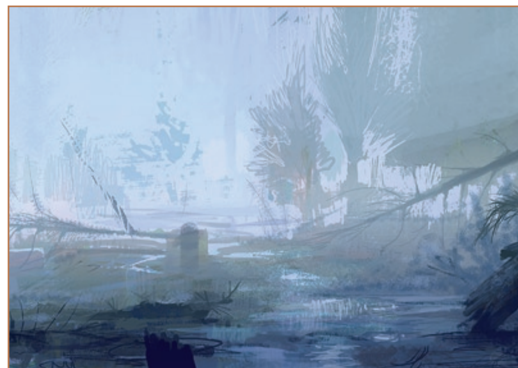




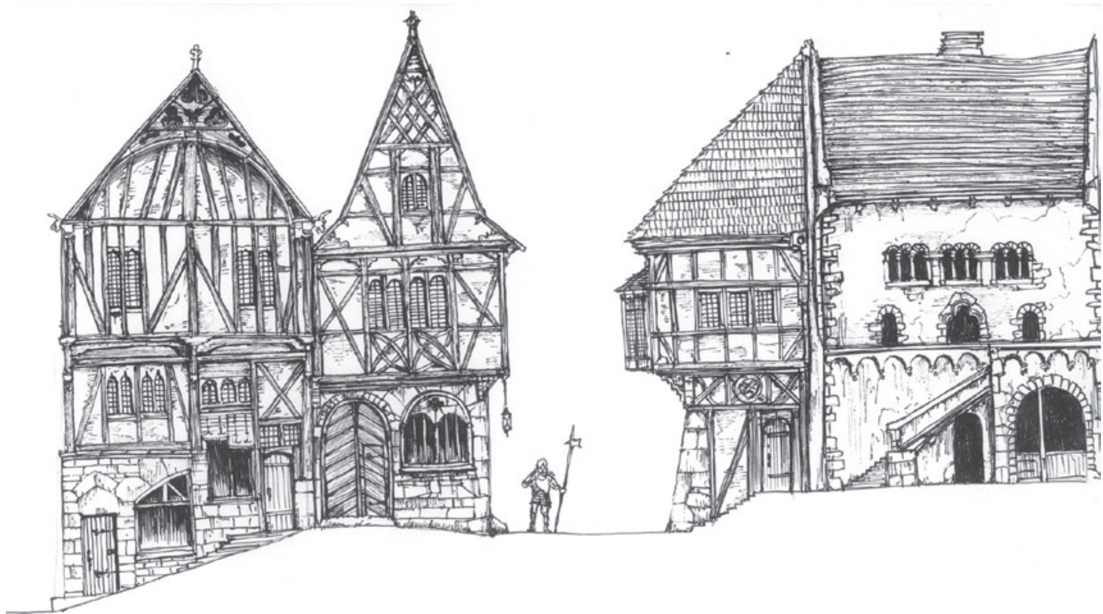






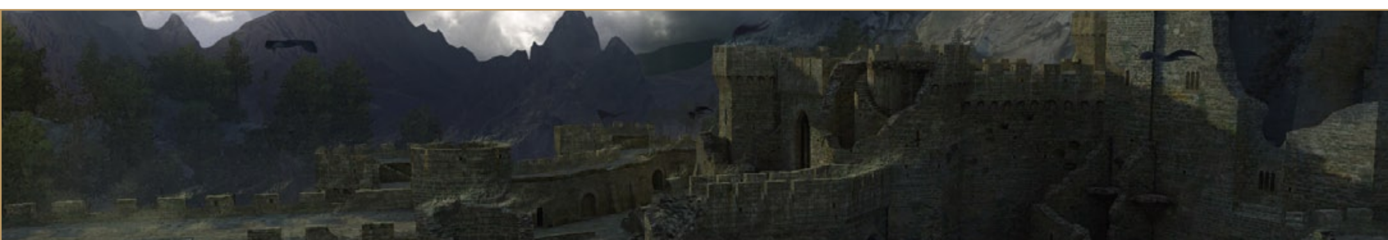






Ranging from broad landscapes to more detailed scenes, these free interpretations strive to convey the spirit of the places portrayed. Artists based these sketches on game designers' descriptions, creating images suggestive enough to inspire changes in preliminary story concepts.





KAER MORHEN

Nudged with a heel, the gelding walked along the streambed. They traversed another ravine and climbed a rounded hill. Now visible, clinging to stone promontories, were the ruins of Kaer Morhen – its partly collapsed defensive wall, the remnants of its barbican and gate, the bulging, dull-pointed pillar that was the keep.
The gelding snorted and jerked its head as they crossed the moat over a crumbling bridge. Triss pulled the reins. She herself was immune to the sight of the moldy skulls and bones at the bottom of the trench. She had seen them before.

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Blood of the Elves*

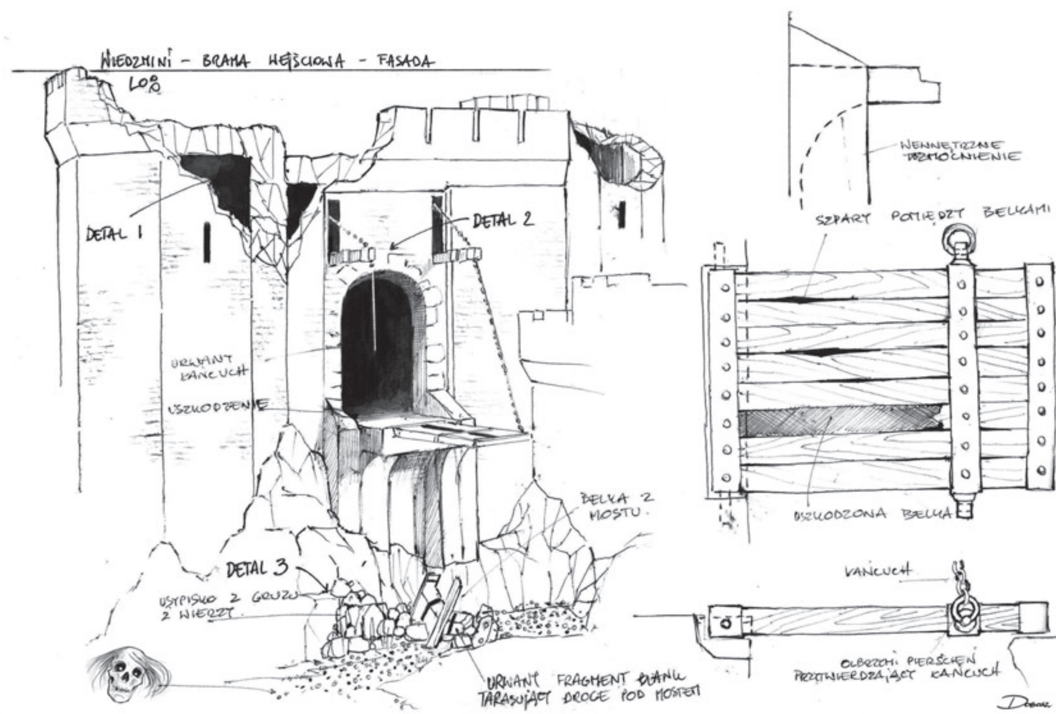
Kaer Morhen, Old Sea Fortress in the Elder Language, took its name from the sea creature fossils found in the surrounding cliffs. The stronghold lies at the edge of the civilized world, amidst mountains that extend across the kingdom of Kaedwen. Long forgotten by humans, few know the way to the castle. Witchers alone visit Kaer Morhen to winter here before setting out in search of work with the advent of spring.
Kaer Morhen was destroyed long ago during riots that culminated in a massacre. Deviously incited against changelings, a crowd killed most of the witchers and demolished much of the fortress. Today Kaer Morhen is vacant and cheerless, a forgotten refuge for the last monster slayers. Observed against the surrounding peaks, its walls remain impressive, evoking the early days of human colonization, when witchers were often the first settlers' only protection.

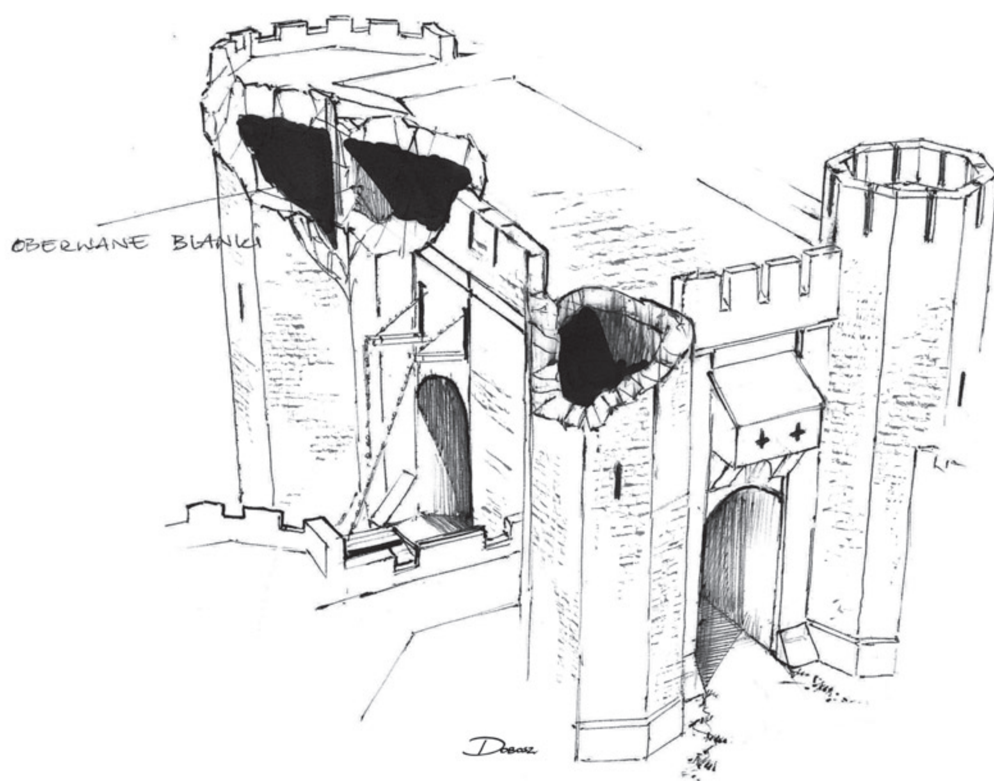


Preparations for designing Kaer Morhen began with a search for a building that would inspire us and serve as a basis for the model. We examined hundreds of European castles in photographs and traveled broadly, cameras in hand. Visiting Orava Castle proved an epiphany. Located in Slovakia, this beautiful fortress consists of three sets of buildings positioned around two courtyards – one internal, one external. The upper castle, perched on a peak, seems to defy the laws of physics, emphasizing the complex's fantastical appearance. We found the architecture and surrounding landscape completely enchanting and decided Kaer Morhen would look like this.



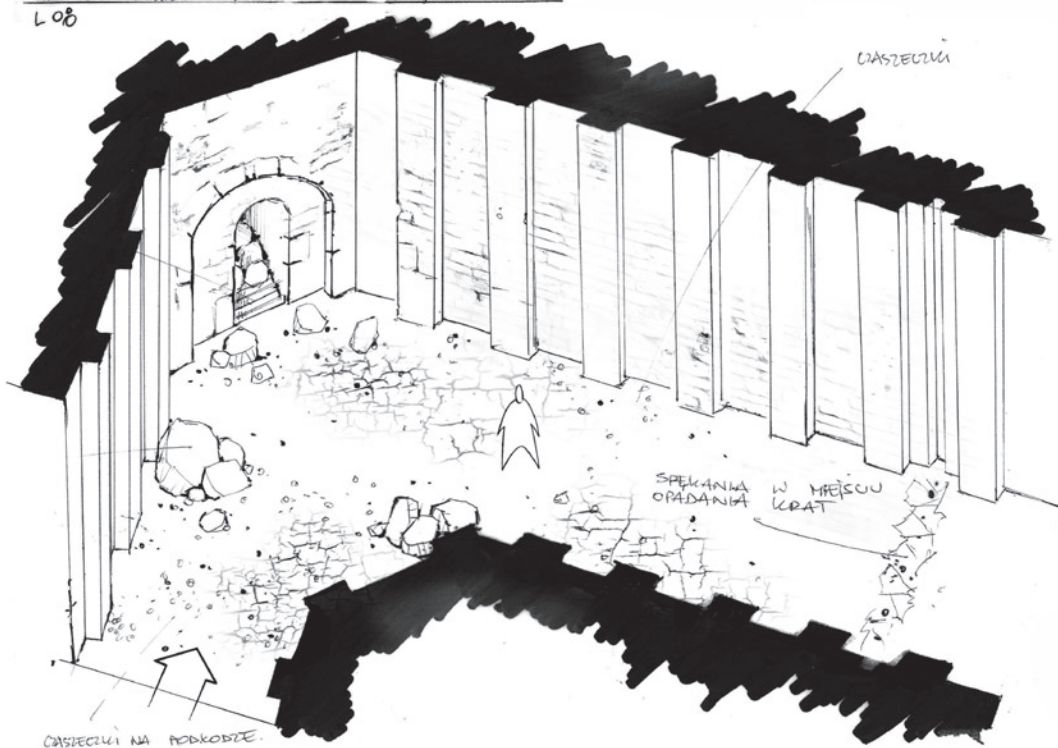
Architecture was just one of the elements that would determine the location's character. In the spirit of Sapkowski's novels, Kaer Morhen had to be monumental yet isolated from the rest of the world, located amidst a wilderness. The Old Sea Fortress was to be a ruin, deserted, gloomy, evocative of the past. Initially, the events set here were to take place in winter, as the witchers returned from their 'paths.' Ultimately we abandoned this idea. Much effort was put into portraying the building as a 'ruin.' Kaer Morhen's wall is breached in several places, rubble lies all around, and many battlements have collapsed. As Geralt runs to face his foes, stairs leading to the wall-walk collapse behind him.

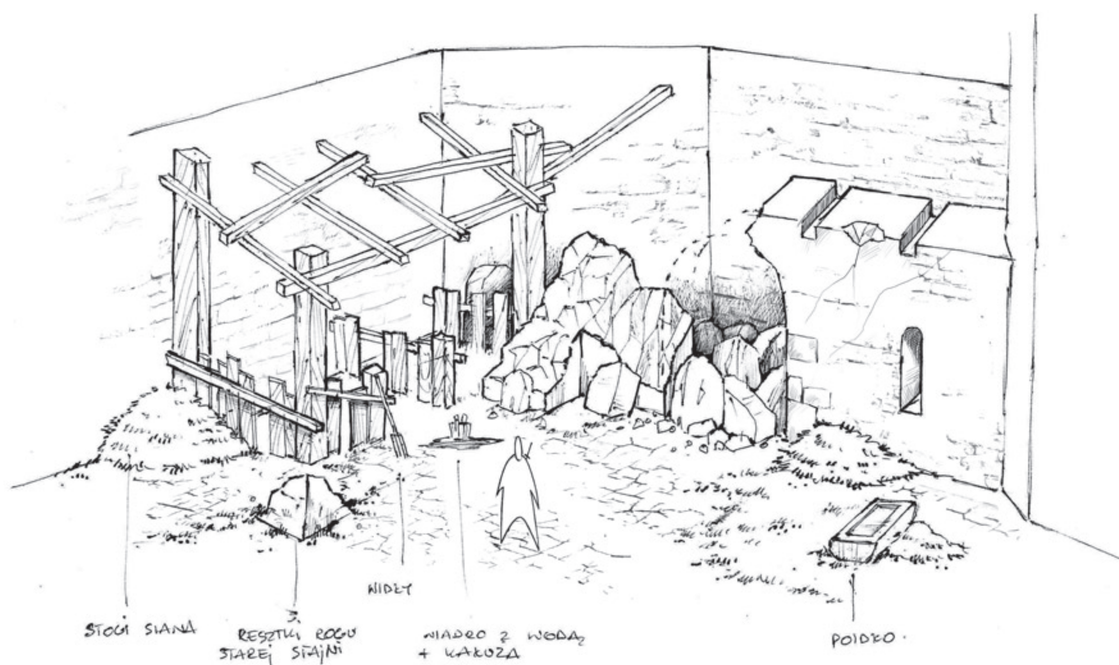

WIEDZMINI - BRAMA WEJŚCIOWA - FASADA
DETAL 1
DETAL 2
URWANY ŁAŃCUCH
USZKODZENIE
BELKA Z MOSTU.
DETAL 3
USYPISKO Z GRUZU Z WIEŻY
URWANY FRAGMENT BLANKI TARASUJĄCY DROGĘ POD MOSTEM
WEWNĘTRZNE WZMOCNIENIE
SZPARY POMIĘDZY BELKAMI
USZKODZONA BELKA
ŁAŃCUCH
OLBRZYMI PIERŚCIEŃ PRZYTWIERDZAJĄCY ŁAŃCUCH
Dobosz


OBERWANE BLANKI
Dobosz

Enthusiasts of Sapkowski's novels surely remember the tunnel through which Triss Merigold approached Kaer Morhen. This element proved troublesome: faithfully rendered, it was undesirable for game reasons. The entrance to Kaer Morhen needed to meet several requirements. An imposing defensive structure, it had to be producible and playable. Through long discussions we arrived at the sketches reprinted on this and the previous page. These became the basis for the model. The drawings correspond to Sapkowski's description of the fortress in *The Blood of the Elves*.

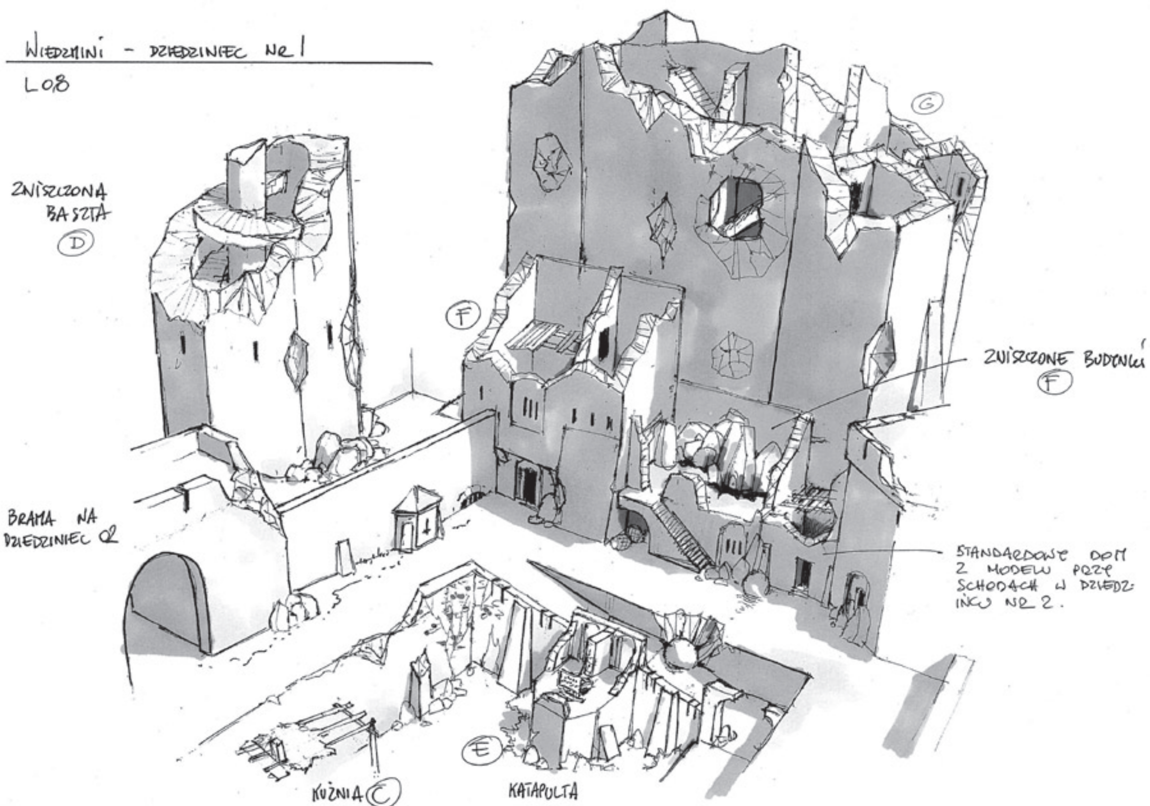


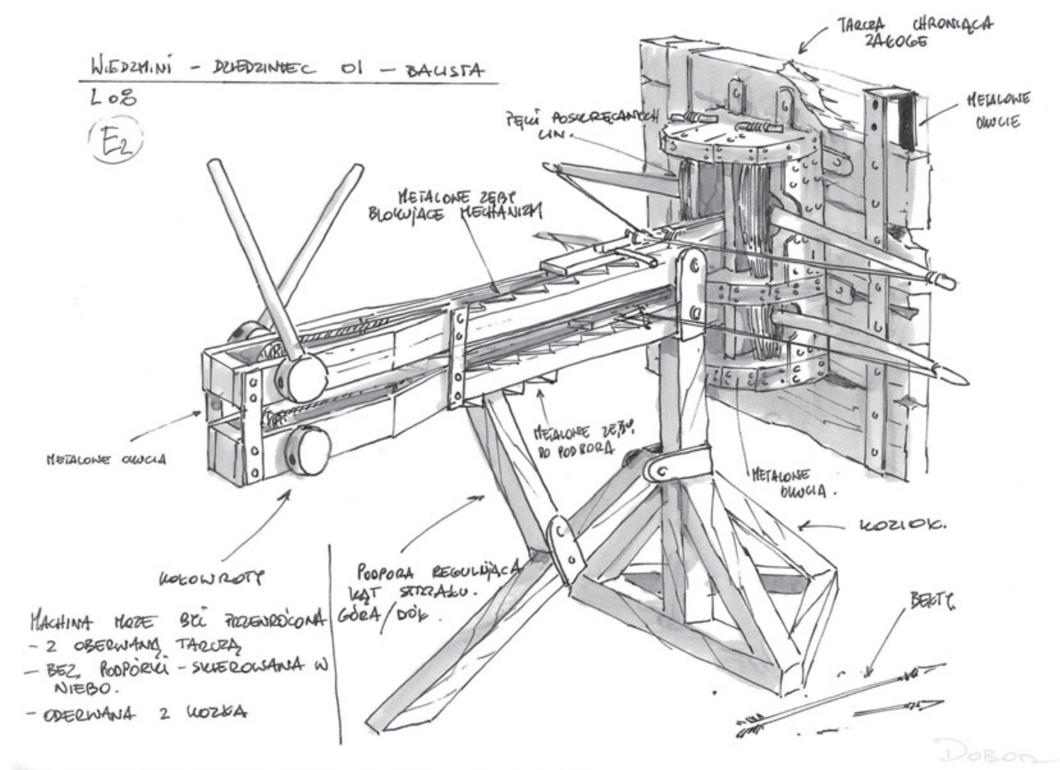


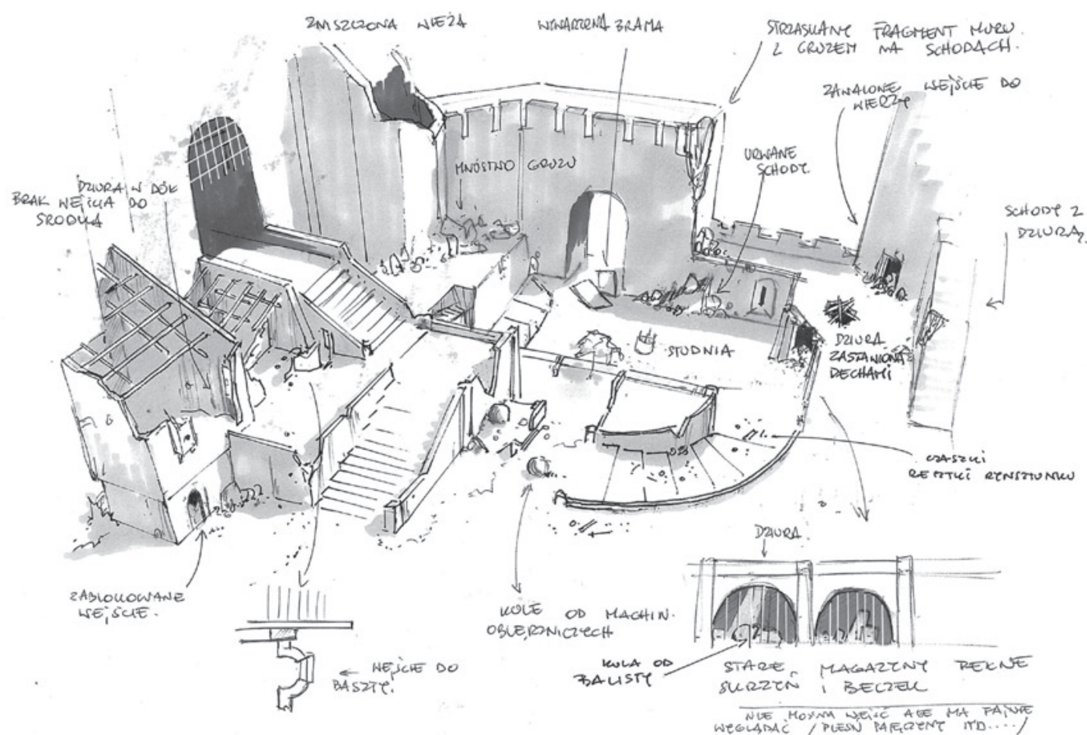


WIEDŹMINI - DZIEDZINIEC NR 01 - STAJNIA
L 08

Dobosz

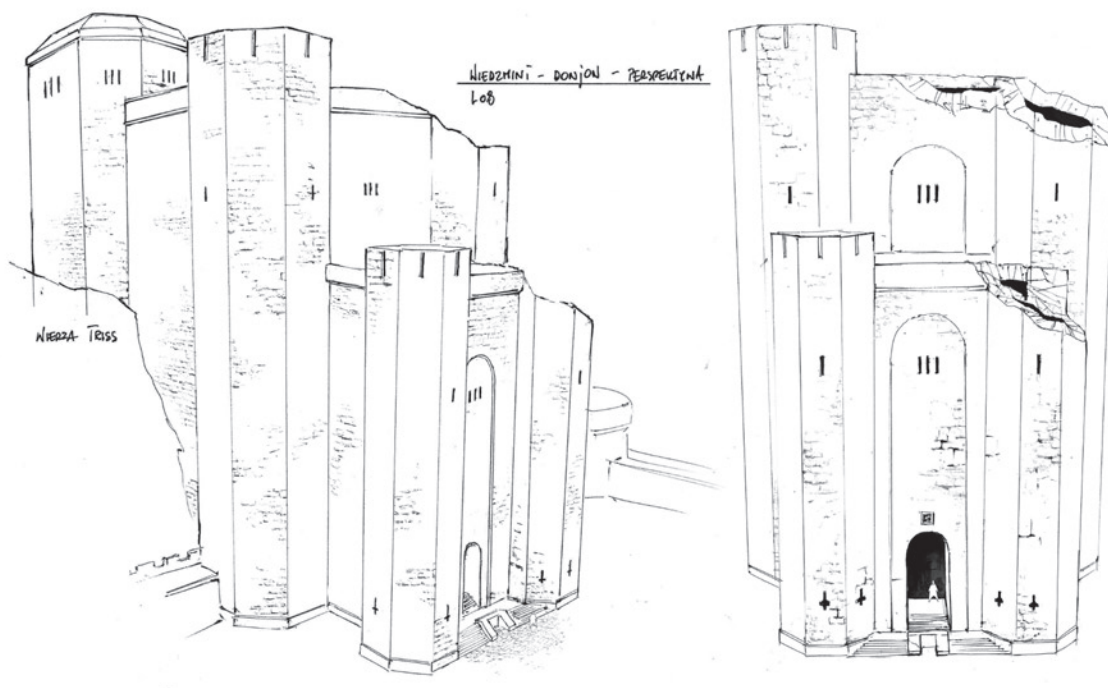

WIEDZMINI - DZIEDZINIEC NR 1
L08
ZNISZCZONA BASZTA
D
F
G
ZNISZCZONE BUDYNKI
F
BRAMA NA DZIEDZINIEC 02
STANDARDOWE DOM Z MODELU PRZY SCHODACH W DZIEDZIŃCU NR 2.
KUŹNIA C
E
KATAPULTA

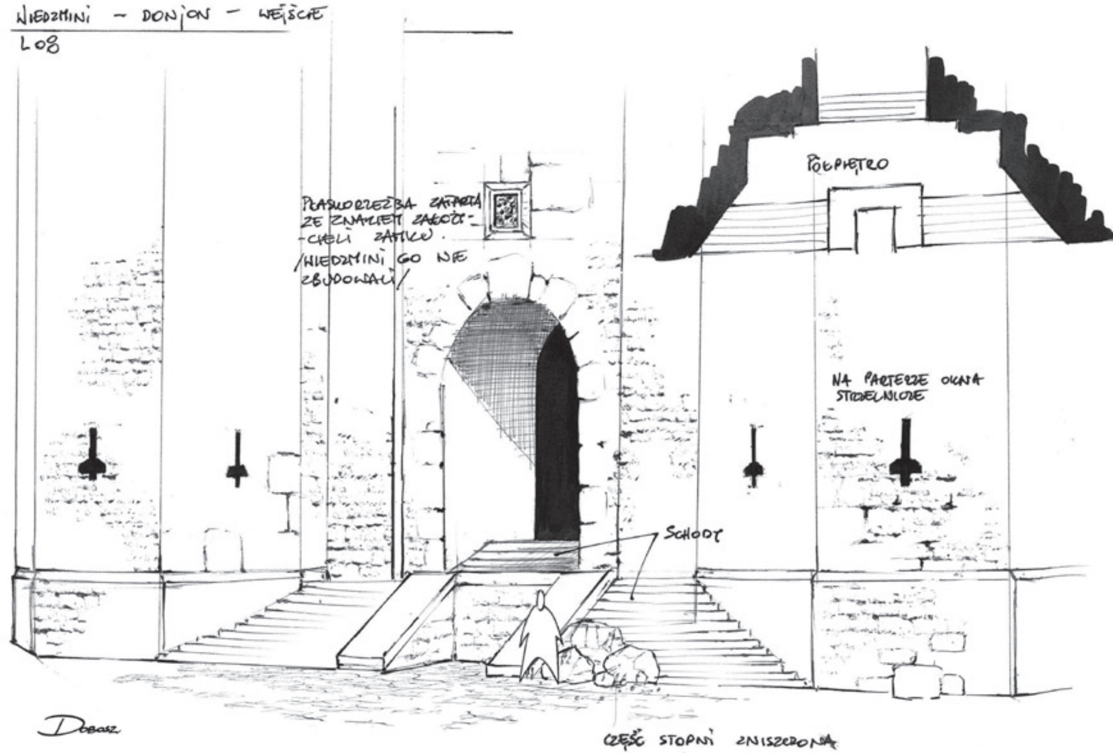

WIEDZMINI - DZIEDZINIEC 01 - BALISTA
L08
E2
TARCZA CHRONIĄCA ZAŁOGĘ
METALOWE OKUCIE
PĘTLE POSKRĘCANYCH LIN.
METALOWE ZĘBY BLOKUJĄCE MECHANIZM
METALOWE OKUCIA
METALOWE ZĘBY DO PODPORY
METALOWE OKUCIA.
KOZIOŁ.
KOŁOWROTY
PODPORA REGULUJĄCA KĄT STRZAŁU. GÓRA/DÓŁ.
BEŁTY.
MACHINA MOŻE BYĆ PRZEWRÓCONA
- Z OBERWANĄ TARCZĄ
- BEZ PODPÓRKI - SKIEROWANA W NIEBO.
- ODERWANA Z KOZŁA

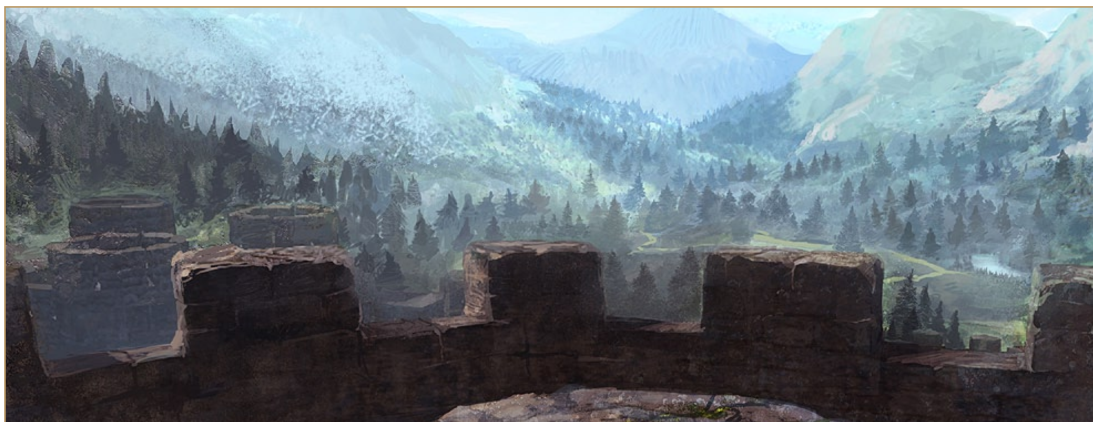


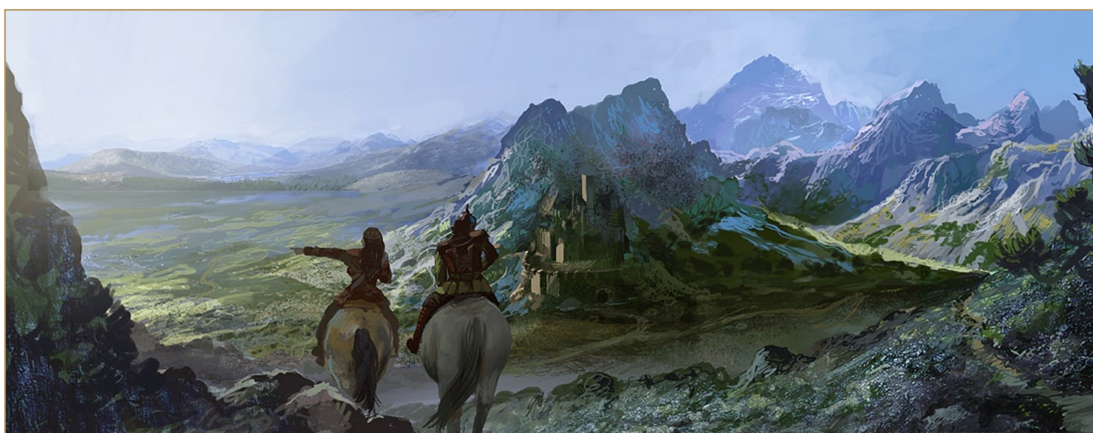
Kaer Morhen was designed to withstand long sieges. Though its fortifications failed to prevent the witchers' massacre, it was once a real stronghold. In the times of its glory, it could repel the attacks of great armies. The building's multiple levels allowed its garrison to surrender the lower courtyard and seek shelter in the smaller, more easily defended upper bailey.

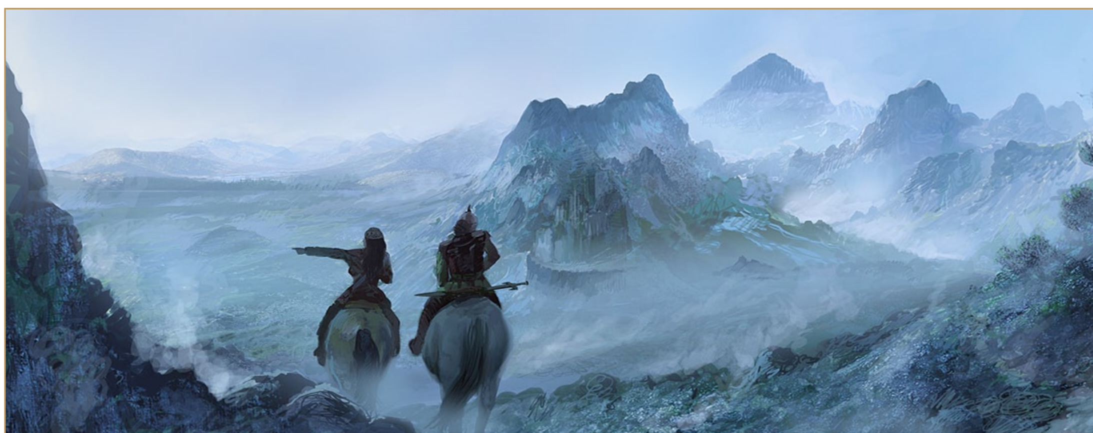
The sketched details were important, serving to enrich the castle, render it more real. The defenders were protected by thick walls, a moat and drawbridge, and narrow gates. The bastion provided added shelter. While under siege the garrison drew water from a well drilled in solid rock – similar to the one at Orava Castle. The graphic artists also outfitted the fortress with artillery, designing a catapult and ballista. We focused on the latter machine, as the game script called for Geralt to fire its large missiles at the frightener that attacks the witchers. When this idea was abandoned, we introduced giant cauldrons for hot oil that could be poured onto attackers during a siege. Targeted with the Aard Sign, these siege cauldrons emit a loud, vibrating sound that stuns the frightener. In early versions of the story, the bandits attacking Kaer Morhen ascended its walls using ropes and ladders, but this idea was also set aside. The attackers now enter the fortress assisted by magic and a powerful monster that easily crashes through the iron bars that block the gate.


WIEDŹMINI - DONJON - PERSPEKTYWA
L08
WIEŻA TRISS

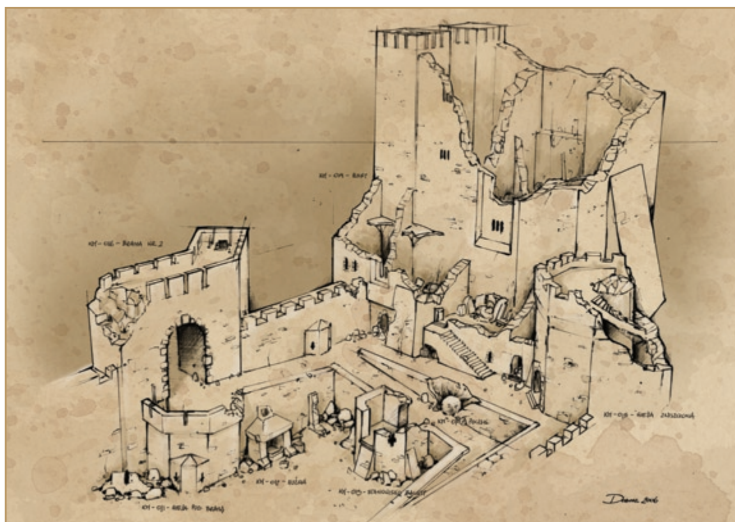

WIEDŹMINI - DONJON - WEJŚCIE
L08
PŁASKORZEŹBA ZATARTA ZE ZNAKIEM ZAŁOŻYCIELI ZAMKU. /WIEDŹMINI GO NIE ZBUDOWALI/
PÓŁPIĘTRO
NA PARTERZE OKNA STRZELNICZE
SCHODY
CZĘŚĆ STOPNI ZNISZCZONA
Dobosz

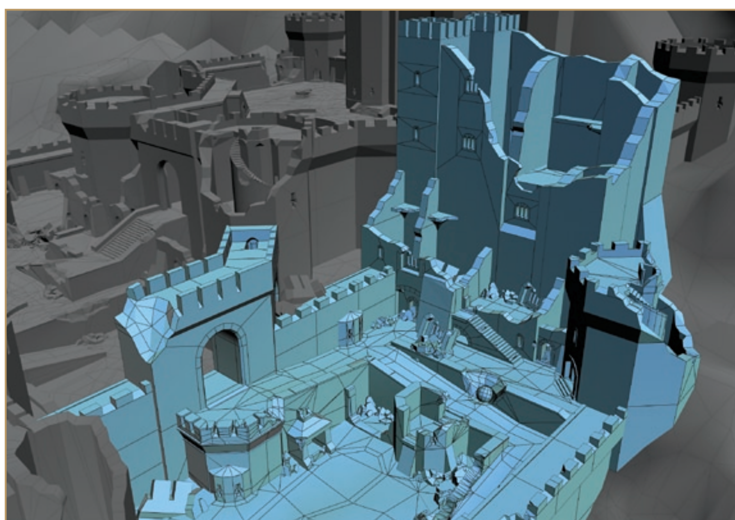






The surroundings of the Old Sea Fortress add to its mood. We produced conceptual sketches of the castle and landscape simultaneously. Kaer Morhen stands in a wilderness, amidst forests that cling to mountains whose peaks disappear in the clouds. Mists cape the valleys below. A stream flowing to the Gwenllech River is visible from the fortress walls. There are no human settlements in sight.





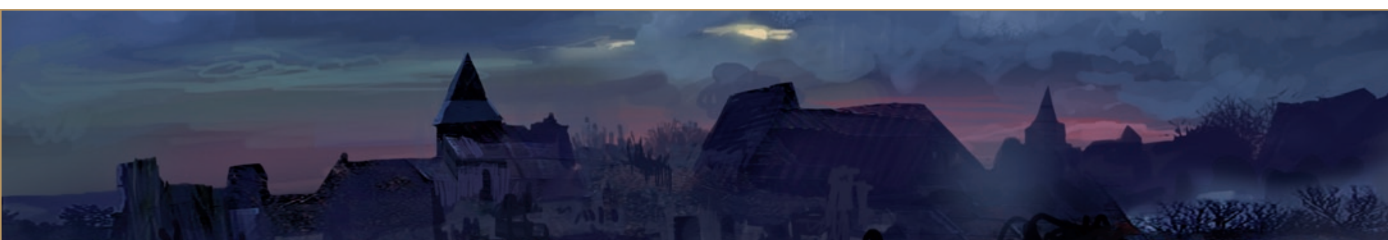


The illustrations on the left show the process by which Kaer Morhen was created. The conceptual drawing depicts the lower courtyard, where the witchers repel the first attack and from which they withdraw before the frightener arrives. This three-dimensional drawing, designed to facilitate work on the model, presented all the details of the structure.

A faithful representation of the concept, the model consisted of permanent elements that were then supplemented with placeables – scenery components and decorations added in the game editor. These include the siege cauldrons, barrels, crates, and piles of rubble seen in the game.

A mesh was then applied to the model, enabling textures to be mapped onto it. This was an arduous task because the textures had to match the mesh precisely. In a bid to make the scenery as realistic as possible, we used photographs of old buildings to create the textures.

The final step included rendering and lighting the textured model, and adding a skybox representing the sky and horizon. The bottom image depicts the Old Sea Fortress in its final, glorious form.



Vizima's Cemetery

A ravine stretched before them, caped in evening vapors. As far as the eye could see, thousands of barrows and moss-covered monoliths protruded from the mist as if from the sea's surface. Some stones were ordinary and shapeless, others evenly cut to form obelisks and menhirs. Near the center of this stone forest, yet others were grouped into dolmens, tumuli and cromlechs, arranged in circles that were clearly neither accidental nor natural.
"Indeed," the dwarf repeated. "A charming place to spend the night. An elven cemetery. If my memory serves me, you mentioned ghouls recently, witcher? I sense their presence among these barrows, they must all be here: ghouls, graveirs, wraiths, vichts, elven ghosts, specters – the full array. They sit there, all of them, and you know what they whisper? That they need not set out in search of supper, because it just arrived on its own."
" Maybe we should turn back," Dandelion whispered hopefully. "Maybe we should leave while it's light."

Andrzej Sapkowski, *Baptism by Fire*

Every witcher inevitably receives a contract requiring him to explore a cemetery. Fantasy world necropolises are well-known monster breeding grounds, favoring necrophages and various apparitions especially. Vizima was built on elven ruins; its cemetery is as old as the city itself. Both have their secrets.

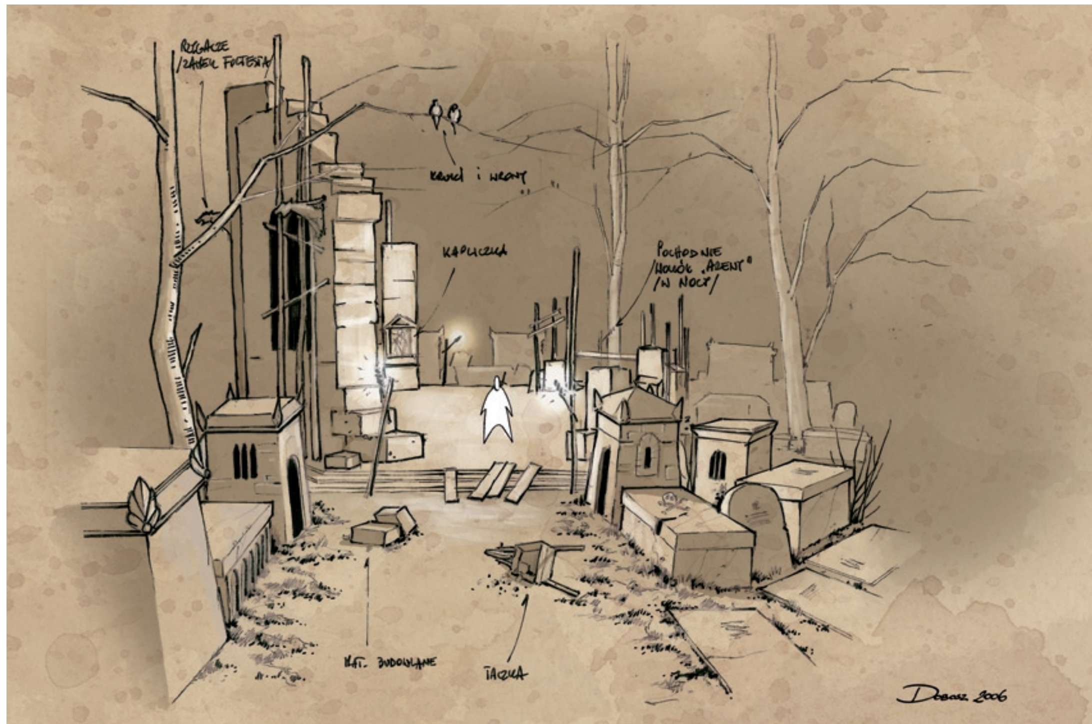


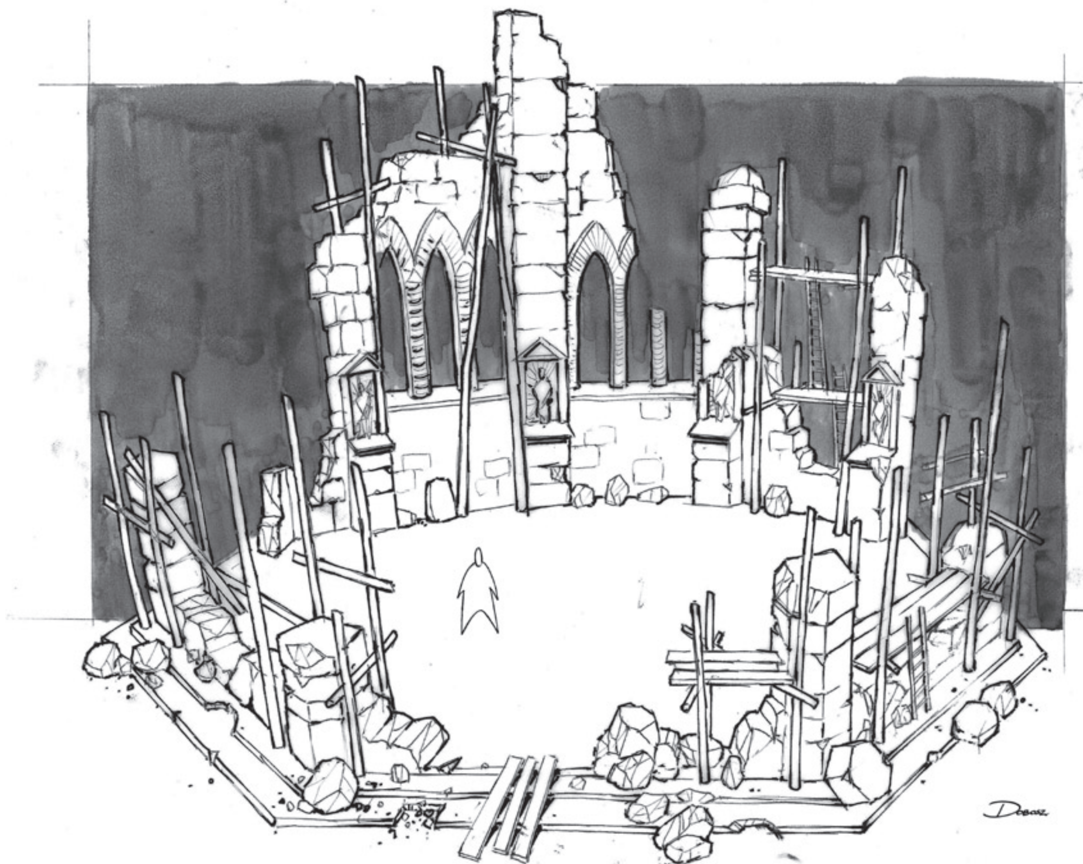


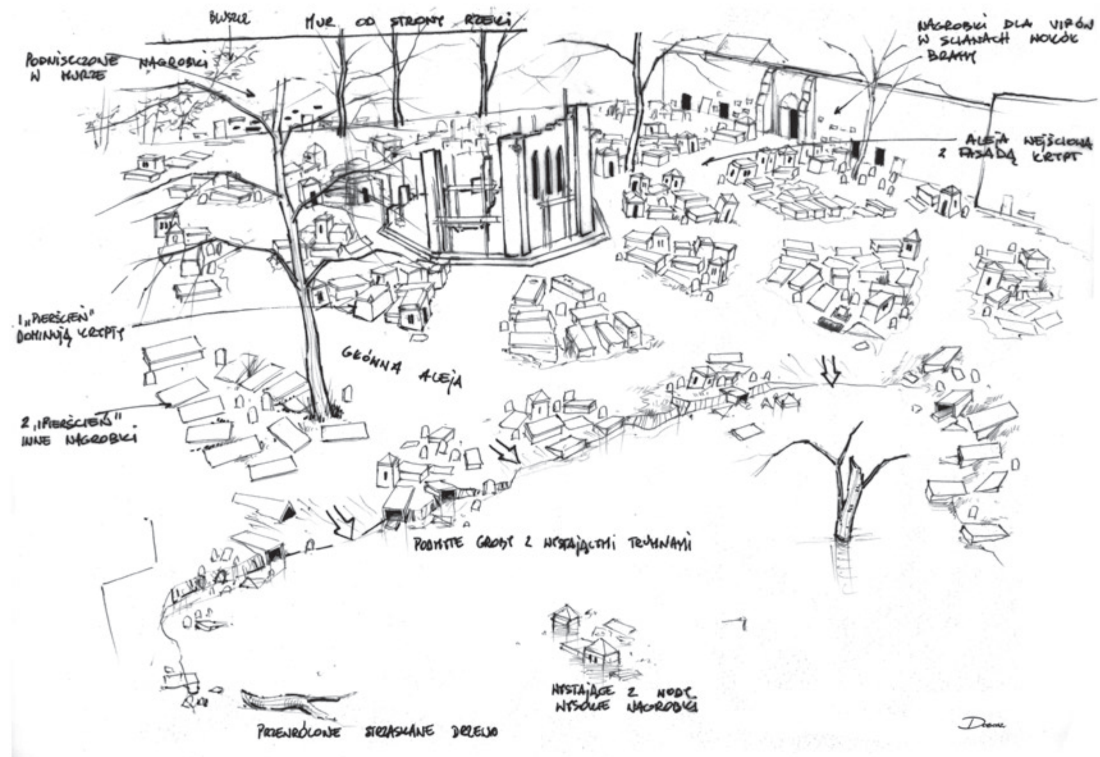


In an early version of the game script, Vizima's cemetery was the site of a battle with a particularly powerful foe known as a 'boss.' And old necropolis, it was to be dark, gloomy, at once visually stunning and highly unsettling.

Abbey in the Oakwood by Caspar David Friedrich, a Romantic-era German painter, served as inspiration and as the first conceptual sketch. The artist depicts the remnants of a Gothic abbey surrounded by leafless trees. The painting's color scheme and mood proved most suggestive to the graphic artists designing the location. They also drew on Friedrich's composition, turning the ring of trees into a ring of ruined mausoleum walls that incorporates the remaining abbey wall. The wooden scaffolding emphasizes the mausoleum's sorry state while suggesting that Vizima's residents may have sought to rebuild the structure, but abandoned their efforts, perhaps driven away by cemetery monsters.

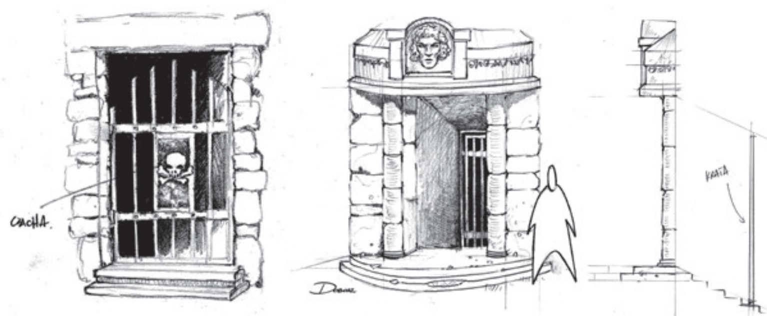

KRUKI I WRONY
KAPLICZKA
/W NOCY/
MAT. BUDOWLANE
TACZKA
Dobosz 2006

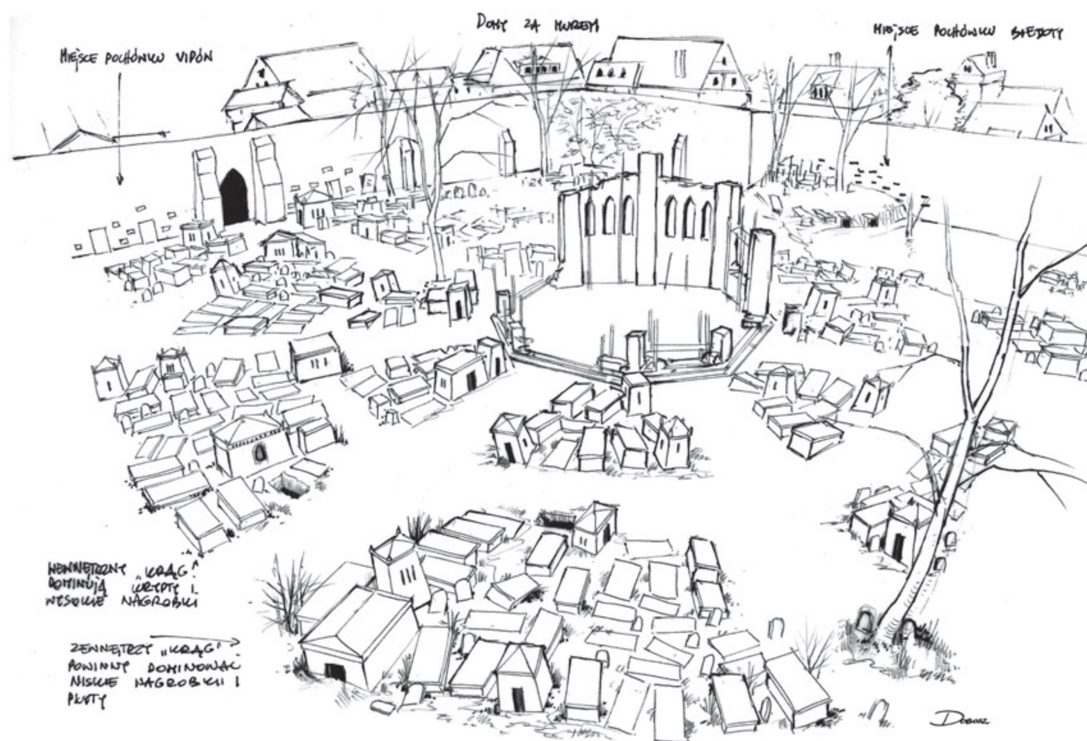

Dobosz



Subsequent sketches depicted the entire location with the mausoleum at its center. We applied Friedrich's compositional concept to the area as a whole, with concentric circles of tombs and gravestones radiating from a central point. Between the gravestones lie the cemetery allies along which characters move.

Tomb locations indicate the social status and affluence of those interred. The illustrious dead occupy wall niches sealed with stone plaques, with the most prestigious wall tombs located nearest the cemetery gate. Imposing tombs also stand along the cemetery's main alley, leading from the gate to the mausoleum, and along the circular path directly surrounding this structure. These graves belong to respected citizens who could afford the luxury of eternal rest along the cemetery's main walk. Modest graves lacking monuments make up the second ring; poorer citizens are buried here. Off to the side lies a separate section for orphans and the dead whose families could not afford to pay for interment. All social outcasts end there.

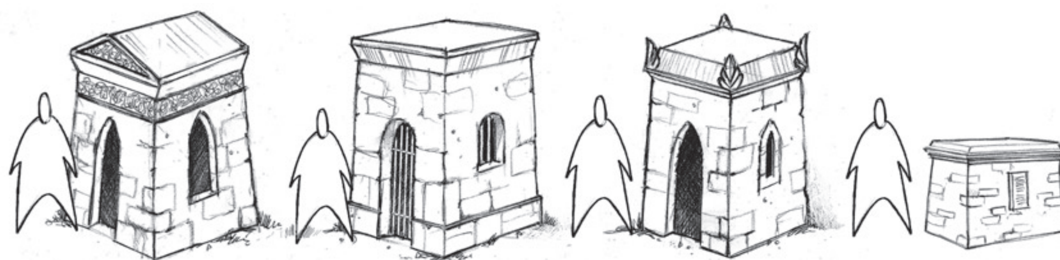


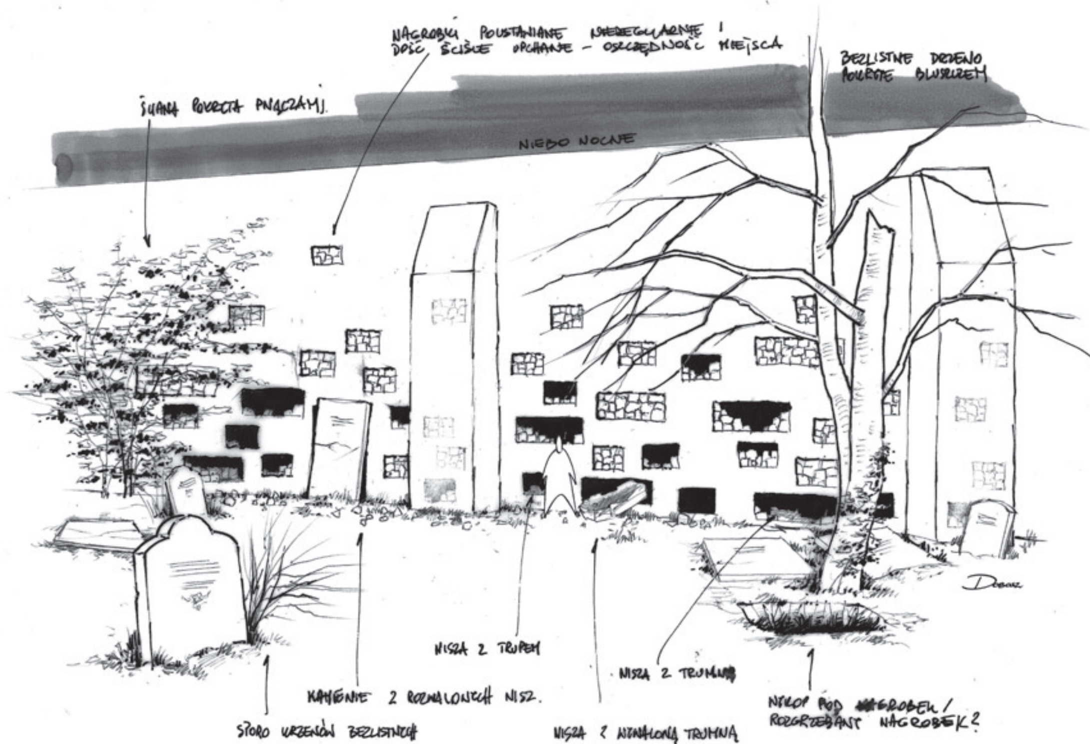


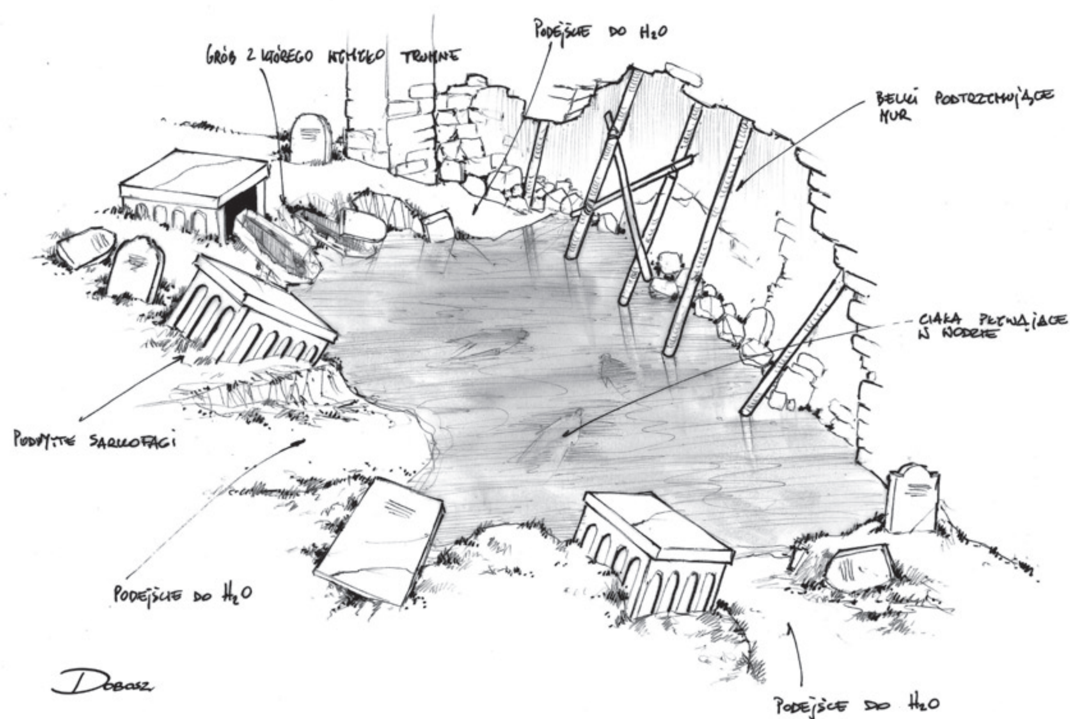
The surrounding cemetery wall isolates it from the rest of Vizima, keeping city life out and ensuring peaceful rest for the dead. It also benefits the living, keeping in ghouls, cemetaurs, and other unwanted residents of the necropolis who haunt it by night.

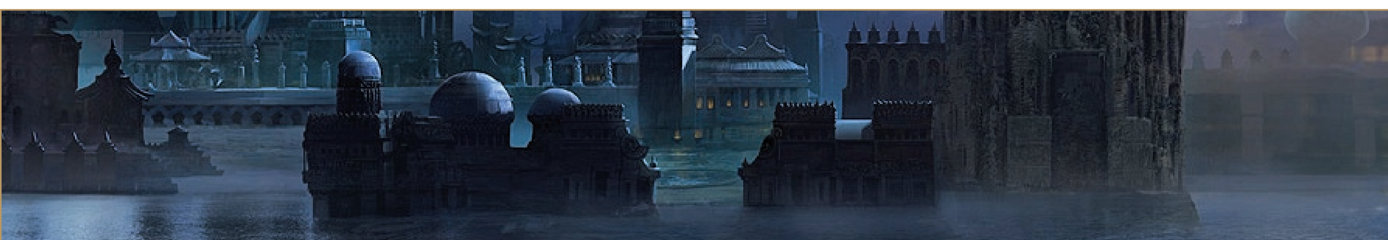
The cemetery is boggy where it adjoins Lake Vizima. The pinnacles of only the tallest gravestones pierce the surface of a small pond that has formed in a depression. The pond adds variety to this part of the landscape: monsters emerge from it, while as a habitat for aqueous plants it is also a source of useful potion ingredients. Dry leafless trees like those in Friedrich's painting add to the gloom of the ruined and decrepit necropolis, further enriching its landscape.

Tomb designs line the bottom of the page. Vizima was erected on the ruins of an ancient elven city; the tombs dating date back to pre-human times incorporate ornaments like the elf's head relief and sculpted plant motifs. Stylistically they reference Romanesque and neo-Classical designs, thus resembling historical monuments.




NAGROBKI POUSTAWIANE NIEREGULARNIE I
DOŚĆ ŚCIŚLE UPCHANE – OSZCZĘDNOŚĆ MIEJSCA
BEZLISTNE DRZEWO
POKRYTE BLUSZCZEM
ŚCIANA POKRYTA PNĄCZAMI.
NIEBO NOCNE
NISZA Z TRUPEM
NISZA Z TRUMNĄ
KAMIENIE Z ROZWALONYCH NISZ.
SPORO KRZEWÓW BEZLISTNYCH
WYKOP POD NAGROBEK /
ROZGRZEBANY NAGROBEK?
Dobosz


GRÓB Z KTÓREGO TRUMNĘ
PODEJŚCIE DO H2O
BELKI PODTRZYMUJĄCE
MUR
CIAŁA PŁYWAJĄCE
W WODZIE
PODMYTE SARKOFAGI
PODEJŚCIE DO H2O
Dobosz
PODEJŚCIE DO H2O



Lakeside

The land beyond the hills sloped gently down toward a mosaic of flat fields of many colored grains. Amidst them shone the surfaces of three lakes, round and regular like the leaves of a clover, outlined in dark alder thickets. Along the horizon, misty bluish mountains rose above the black, shapeless forest (…).

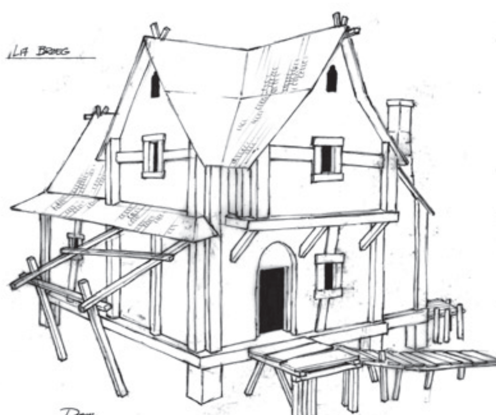
The road led toward the lakes, across dikes and beside ponds concealed among alders and densely populated with quacking mallards, garganeys, grebes and herons. Birds lived here in abundance, surprising given the signs of human activity evident all around. Fascines covered the banks of the well-kept dikes, the culverts of which were strengthened with stones and logs. Water trickled happily through pond sluices that showed no signs of rot. Boats and small piers could be seen in the rushes, and the poles of netting and fishtraps rose above the water's surface.

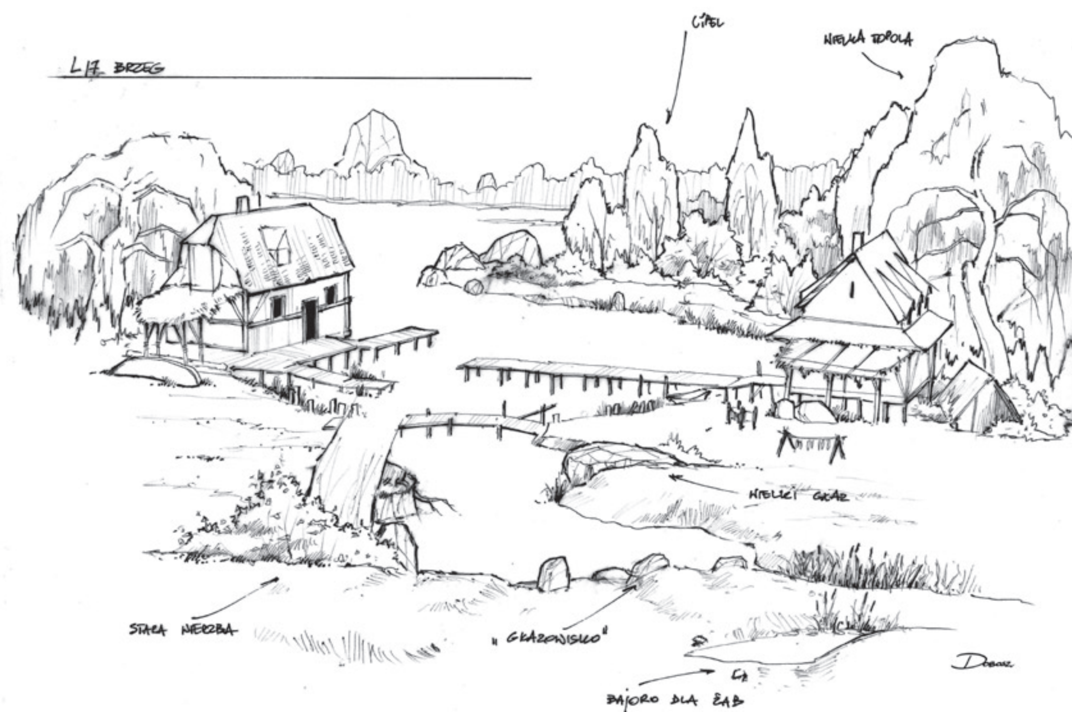
Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Edge of the World*

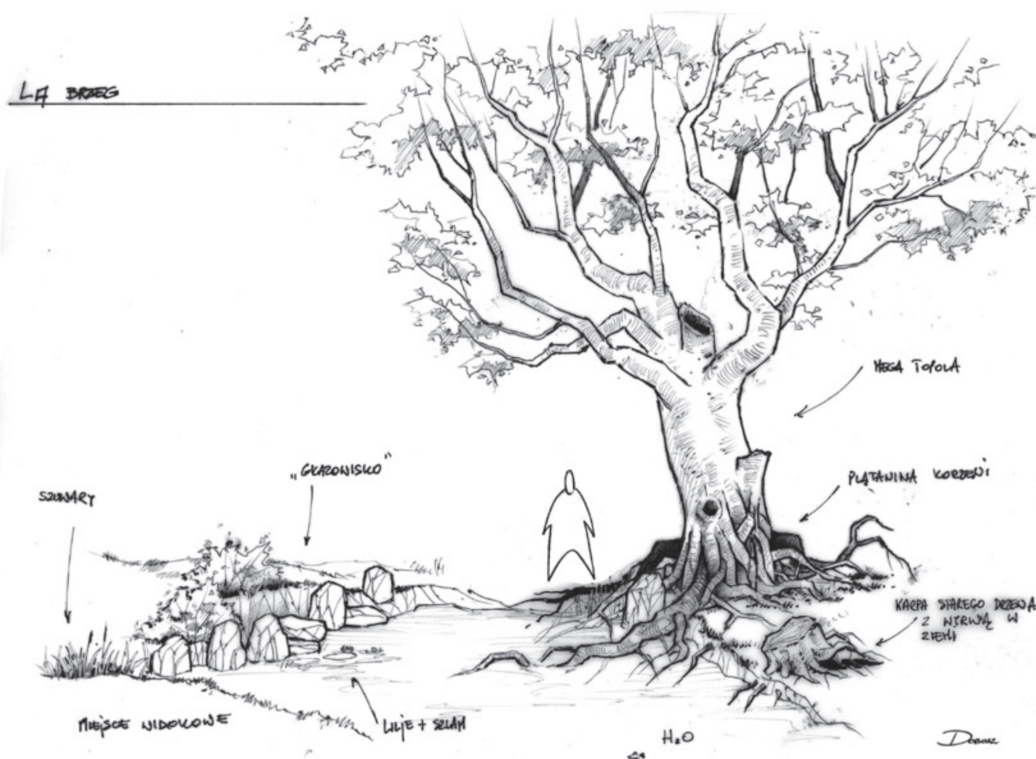


After killing the Professor, Geralt must flee Vizima and the powerful enemies he has made. With Triss Merigold's help, he arrives in Murky Waters, a village far from the hubbub of the city, a place where he has a chance to rest amidst pastoral scenery. His respite is not long-lived as even the residents of this peaceful corner require his services.

According to the game script, Murky Waters and its surroundings were to be an enchanting, nearly arcadian place inspired by the landscape descriptions in *The Edge of the World*. The villagers seem accustomed to the magical sites nearby. Their protector, the Lady of the Lake, ensures their fields remain fertile. A peace-loving people, their evening entertainment is a mirage of the underwater city, consumed long ago by the lake. It appears in the sky when clouds part to reveal the full moon.

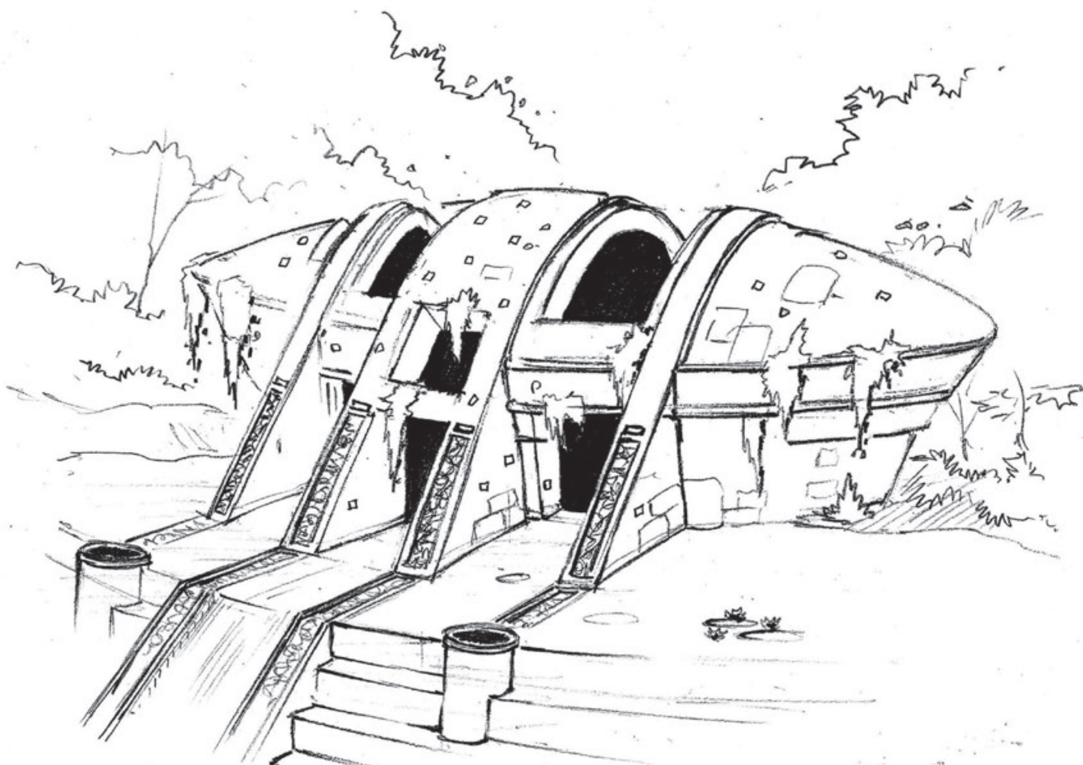


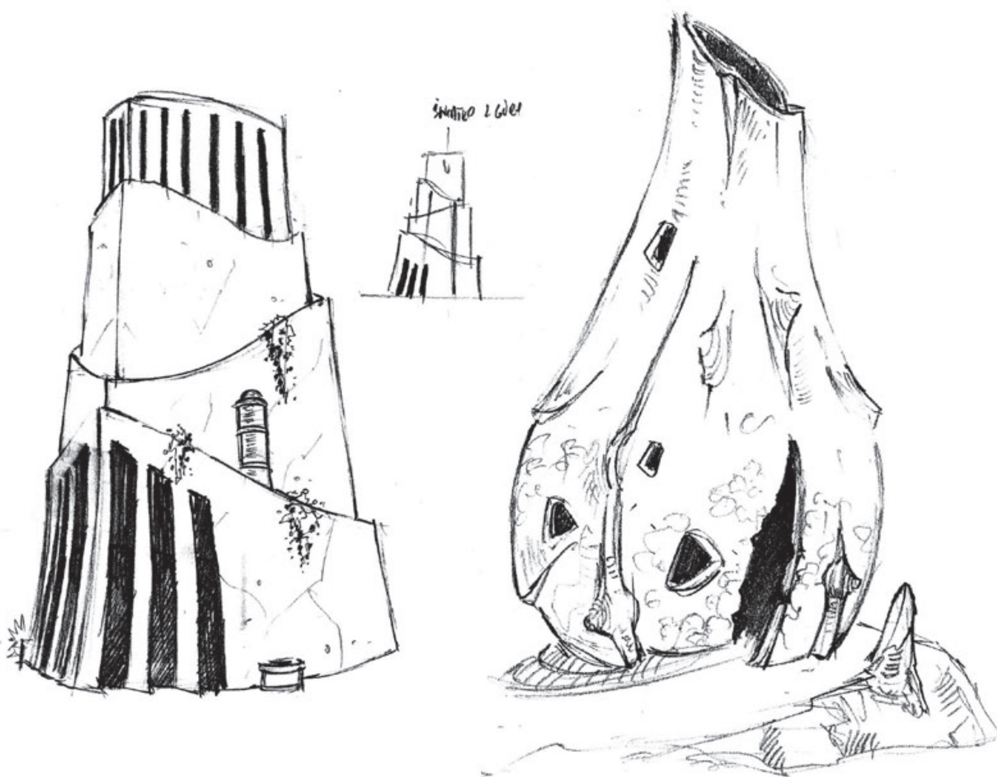

L17 BRZEG
CYPEL
WIELKA TOPOLA
WIELKI GŁAZ
STARA WIERZBA
„GŁAZOWISKO”
BAJORO DLA ŻAB

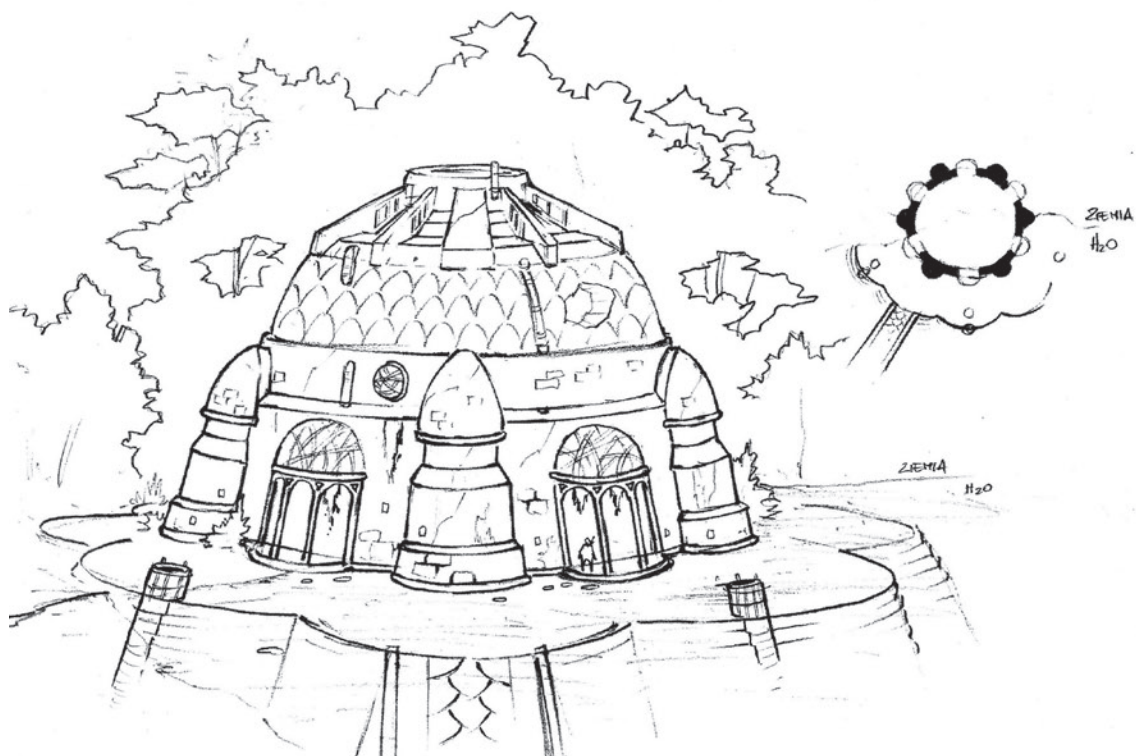

L4 BRZEG
MEGA TOPOLA
PLĄTANINA KORZENI
KARPA STAREGO DRZEWA Z WYRWĄ W ZIEMI
SZUWARY
„GŁAZOWISKO”
MIEJSCE WIDOKOWE
LILIE + SZLAM
H_2O

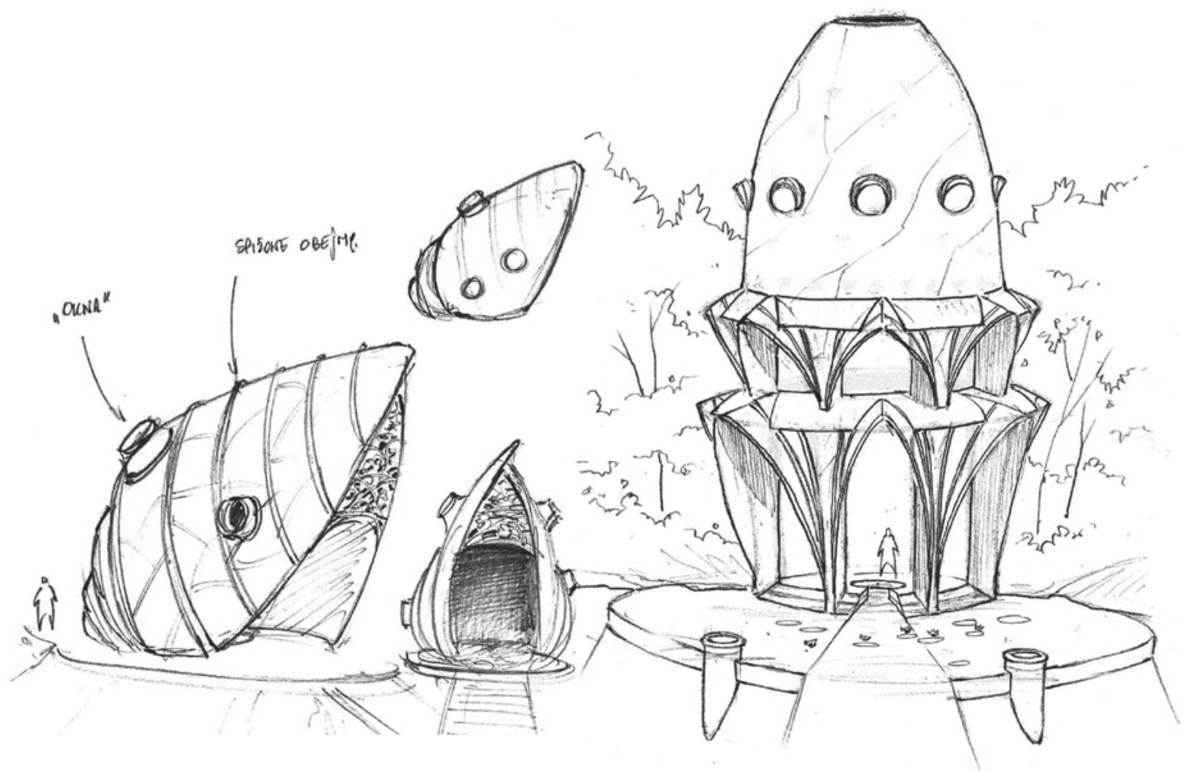
The Altar of Dagon, erected by the vodyanoi on Black Tern Island, required a fresh approach. Built by a race that had little or no contact with human civilization, the altar's architecture had to be strange, clearly different from all other buildings on land. The artists had many ideas, inspired mostly by ocean life in all its variety. The winning concept proved somewhat 'classical,' evoking the legend of Atlantis, though simultaneously incorporating an element resembling the statues of Easter Island.

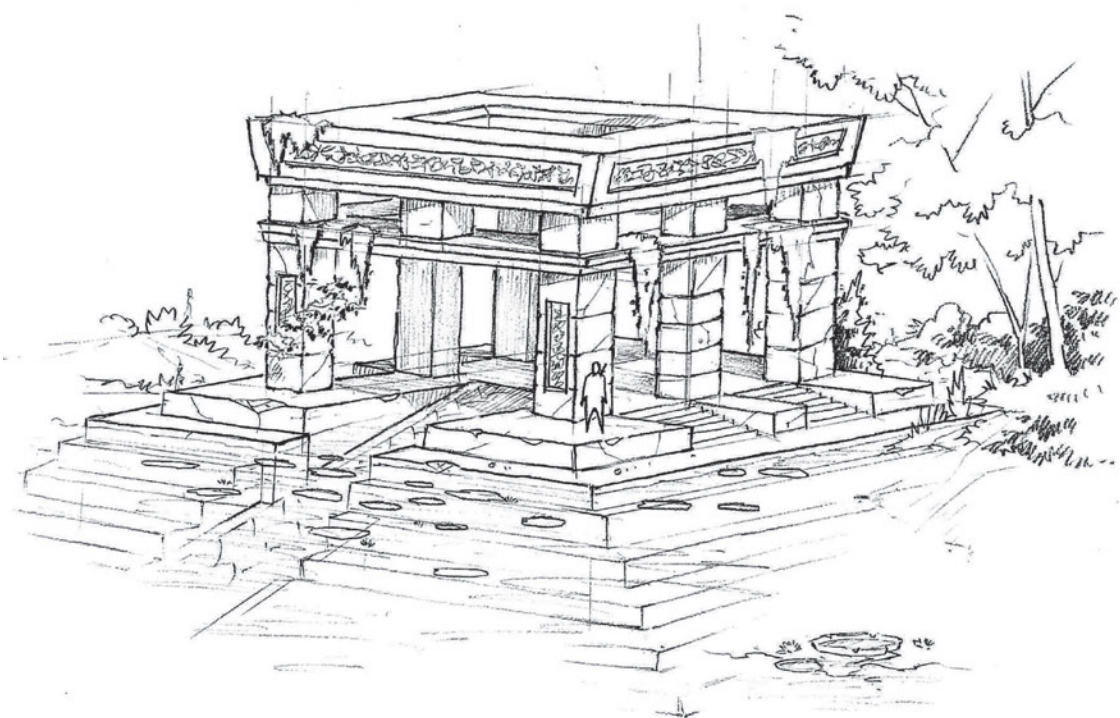




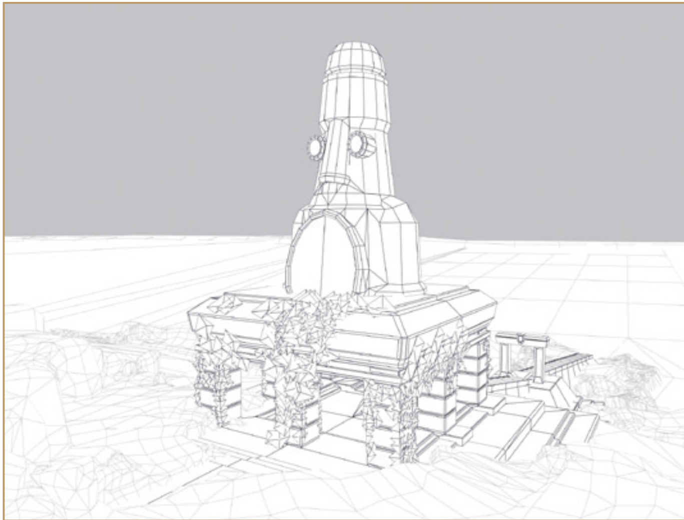


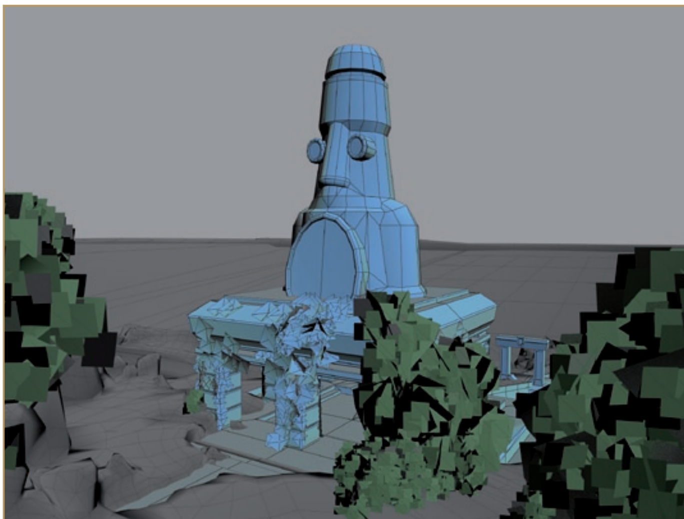

ZIEMIA
H_2O
ZIEMIA
H_2O


„OKNA”
SPIĘTE OBEJMĄ











The process of creating the Altar of Dagon is shown on the left. A detailed sketch of the structure (previous page) was produced for the graphic artist who would create the model. Though the altar stands on the shore, its steps emerge from the water. A primitive representation of Dagon crowns the structure. A mesh of the altar and its surroundings appears in the first image on the left, while the model, nearly complete, can be seen in the third.

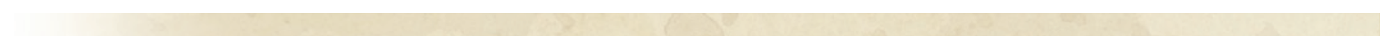
The location appears on the right in its final form. The upper image depicts the Altar of Dagon on Black Tern Island in daytime, the lake and clear skies in the background. A texture suggesting old, moss-covered stone has been applied to the structure's surface, allowing the altar to blend in with its surroundings and creating the impression that it was built centuries ago. The lakeside in the distance and the dense island vegetation produce an almost pastoral feel. Even the deity's statue atop the structure seems unthreatening, even benign.

Observed at dusk and across lake waters, the altar turns threatening. The stairs descending into the deep are clearly visible, the shrine is unsettling against the dark sky, and the Dagon statue dominates the area. At sunset, Black Tern Island is as picturesque as in daytime, though a bit more sinister.











Swamp Cemetery

Geralt gazed out the manor window for the last time. Dusk descended quickly. The blurry lights of Vizima shimmered across the lake. In six years, the town had distanced itself from this perilous place, and a waste now surrounded the manor, a no-man's-land littered with a few ruins, rotting timbers, and the gapped remains of a palisade clearly not worth dismantling and carting away. The king had moved his residence to the opposite end of the settlement. The truncated tower of his new castle loomed black against the darkening sky.

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Witcher*

The Swamp Cemetery is a part of Old Vizima. Created when Temerian kings resided at the Old Manor, it was subsequently abandoned and with time consumed by the surrounding marshland. Forgotten, the necropolis turned into a quagmire, the peaks of burial mounds protruding from its numerous water-filled craters.
A long-abandoned temple devoted to a forgotten deity stands in the cemetery. The catacombs beneath it are the refuge of a striga that emerges at night to hunt in the area.

In devising the architectural style for Old Vizima, we kept in mind that it would also apply to the Old Manor and the temple in the Swamp Cemetery. Slavic folk art and culture served as our sources. Old Vizima is built of wood, so rotting wooden structures also litter the cemetery. The sketches below depict a number of gravesite shrines in the style devised for the location.











The Swamp Cemetery had to be stirring, gloomy and painterly above all. The design was inspired by Romantic era paintings: nocturnes, renderings of picturesque ruins and cemeteries, sentimental landscapes.





Caverns and Crypts

He emerged of a sudden into a vast cavern, its ceiling lost in darkness. At its center was a large, black, seemingly bottomless pit, spanned by a dangerously fragile-looking stone bridge.

Water dripped from the walls, echoing throughout. A cold stench flowed from the pit. His medallion remained still. Geralt mounted the bridge, cautious and focused, staying clear of the crumbling ballustrades.

Beyond the bridge he found another corridor. He noticed rusty torch-nests on its walls worked smooth. Sandstone statues occupied a series of niches, yet over the years dripping water had washed away all things soluble, turning the monuments into shapeless pillars. Further along, stone slabs adorned with reliefs protruded from the walls. Made of a more enduring material, they were more legible. Geralt discerned a woman with lunar horns, a tower, a swallow, a boar, a dolphin and a unicorn.

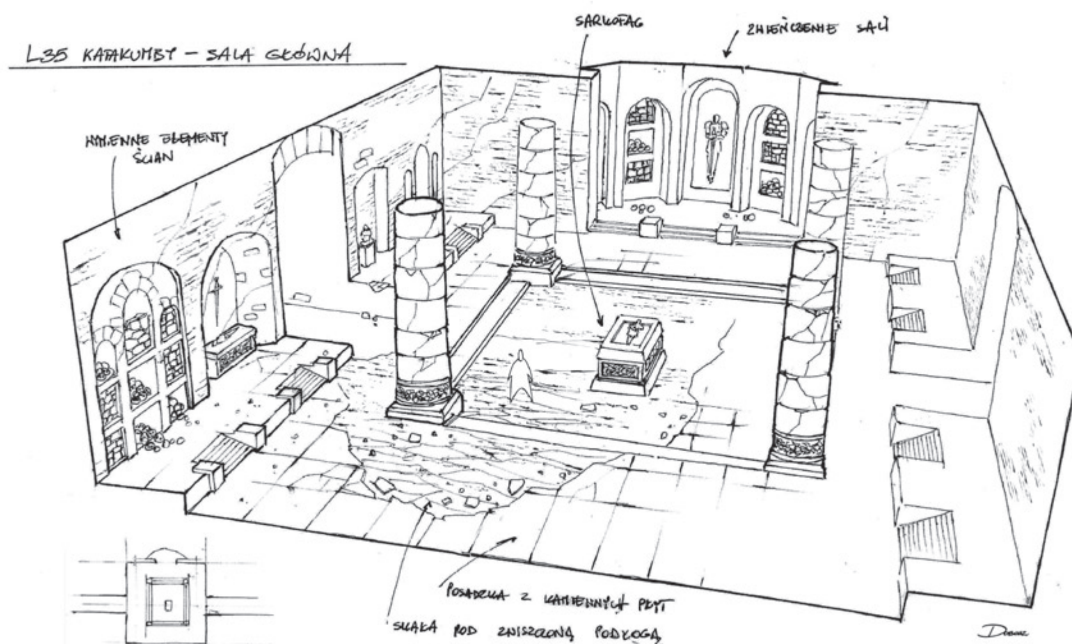
He heard a voice.

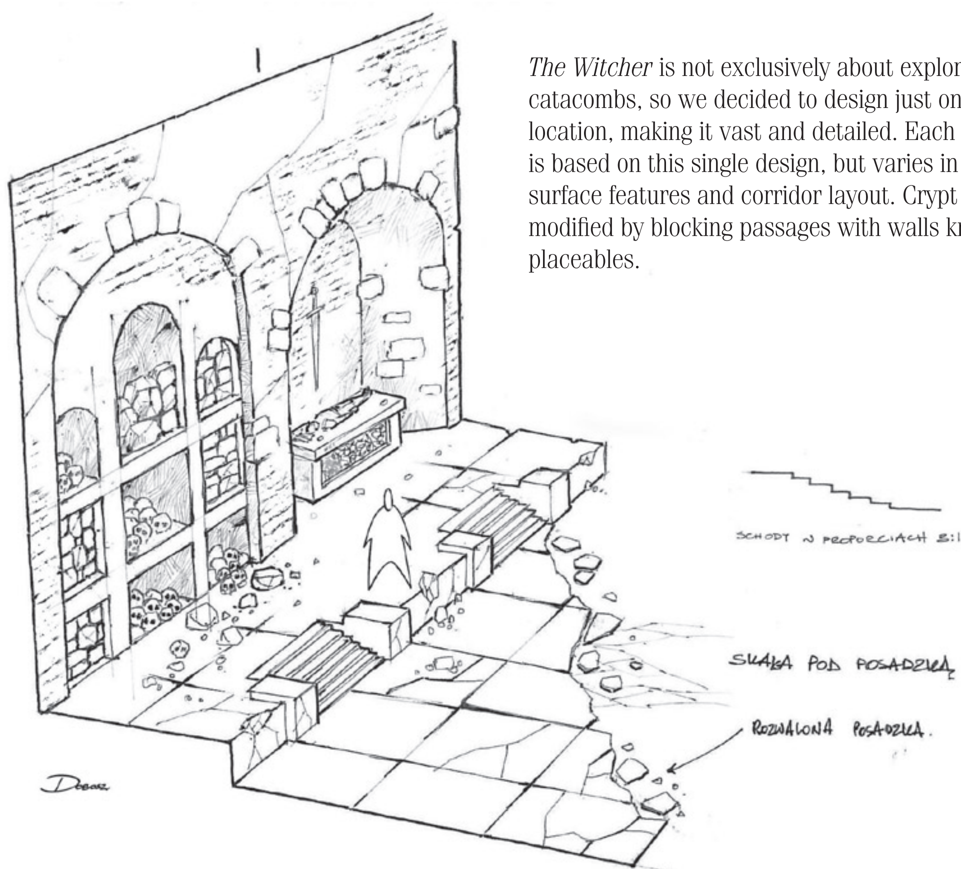
He stopped, held his breath.

His medallion twitched.

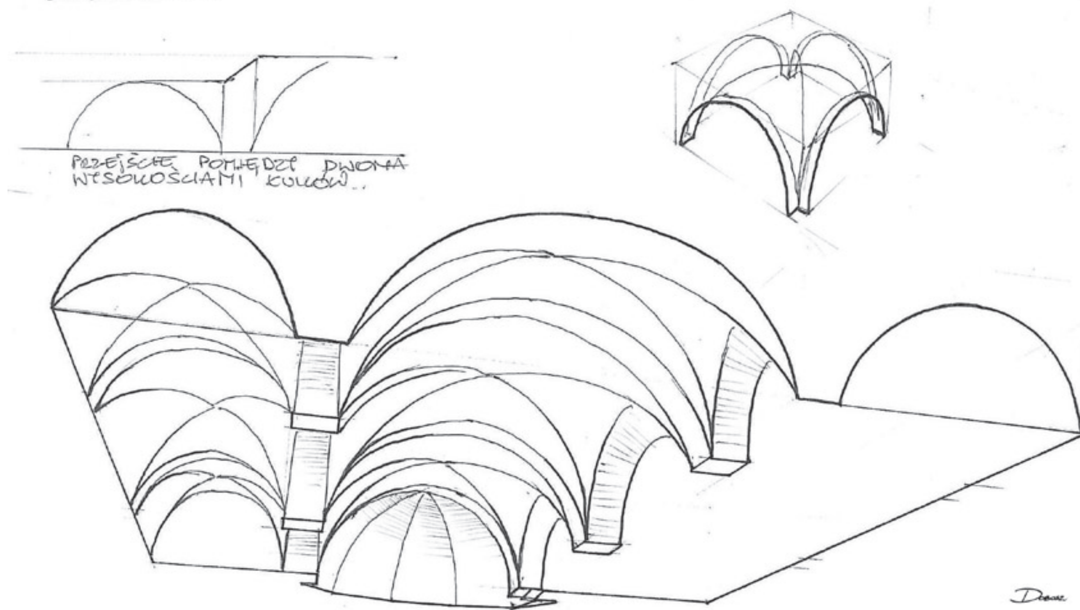
Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Lady of the Lak*

All RPGs feature caverns and crypts for the protagonist to explore. Geralt ventures into them not to search for treasure or forgotten artefacts, but to track down beasts based on contracts he receives.



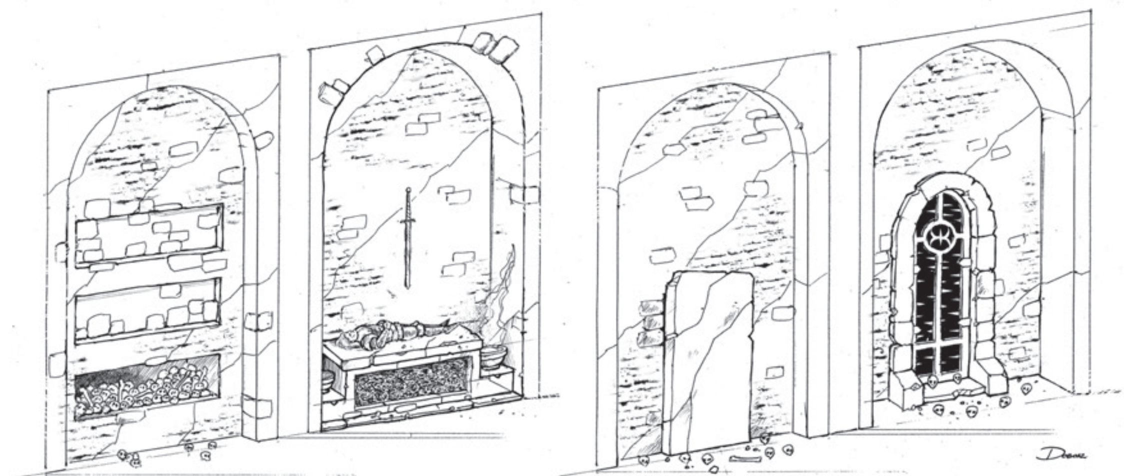


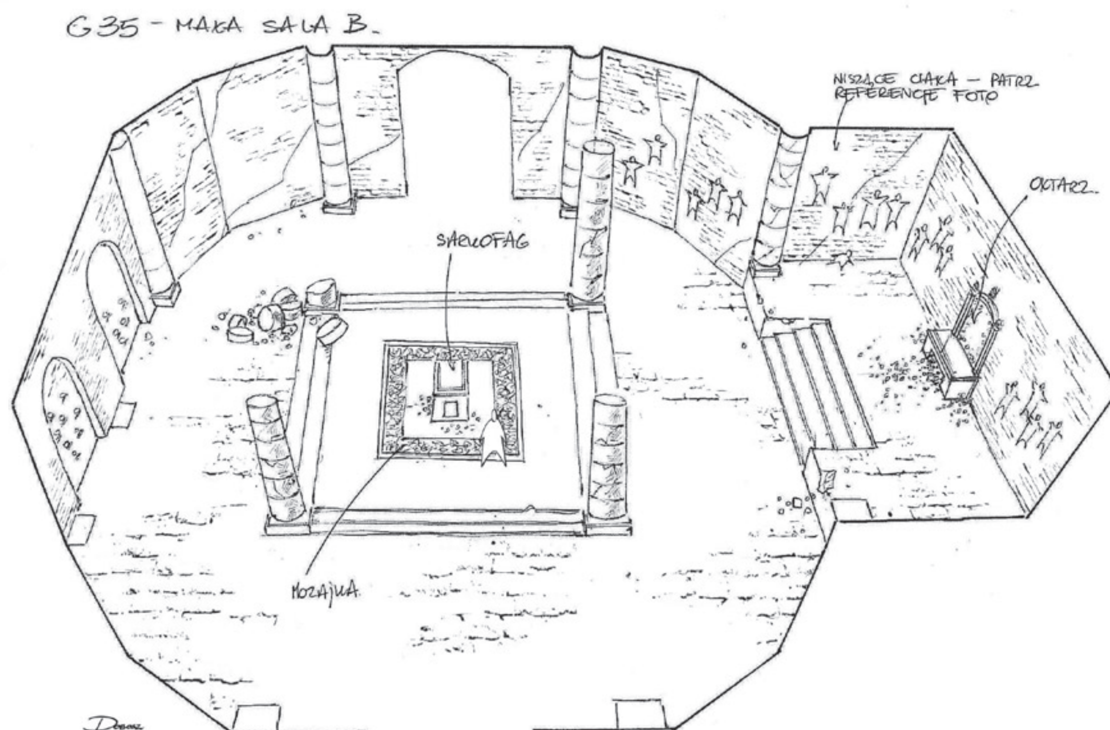
The Witcher is not exclusively about exploring catacombs, so we decided to design just one such location, making it vast and detailed. Each underground is based on this single design, but varies in terms of surface features and corridor layout. Crypt layouts were modified by blocking passages with walls known as placeables.



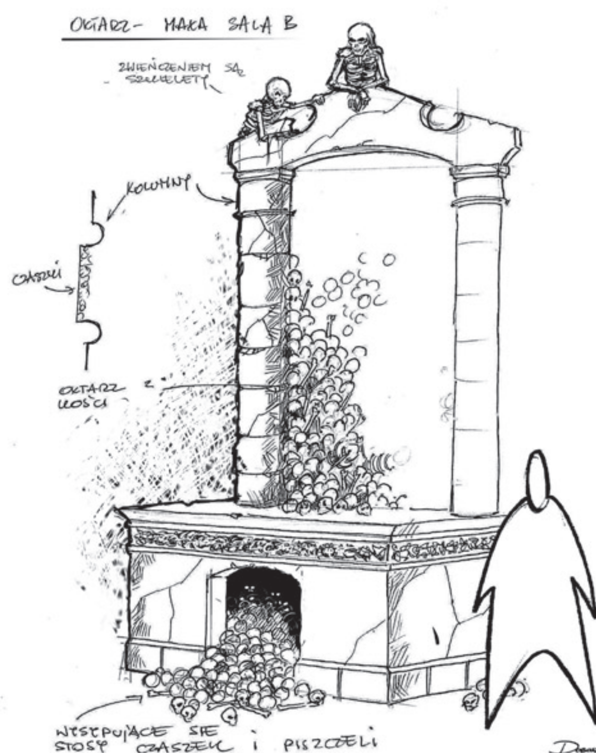
While exploring crypts, Geralt encounters wall tombs, biers bearing sarcophagi, and stone ceiling supports. In multi-level catacombs, lower levels can be seen through iron floor grates. Geralt can search crumbling tombs and coffers containing items interred with the dead.

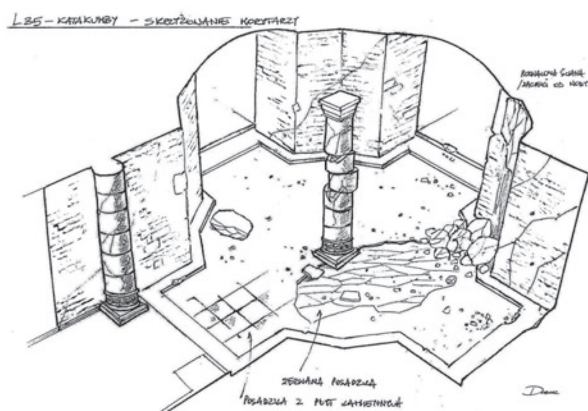
The sketches depict designs for wall niches and a vaulted catacomb ceiling. All our ideas came from actual solutions observed in underground structures. To prevent the catacombs from becoming tedious, artists applied a broad array of ornamentation, which can also serve as a road mark if Geralt loses his way.

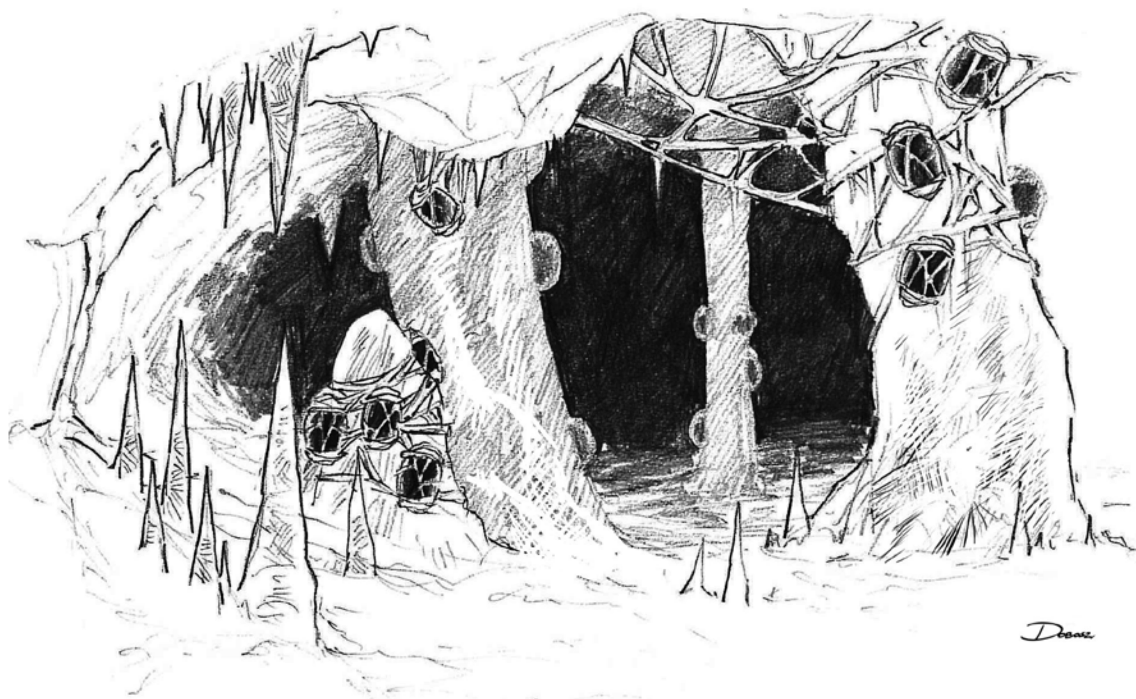




While exploring catacombs, Geralt may find crypts containing the tombs of the rich and powerful. These are impressive in size and adorned with additional elements. Some crypts serve as meeting places for worshippers of evil gods, like the members of the Cult of the Lionhead Spider.



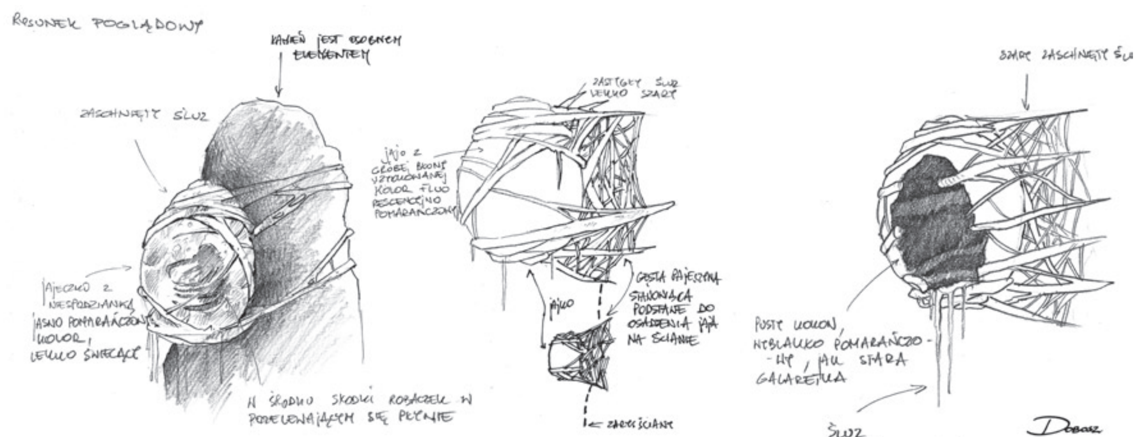


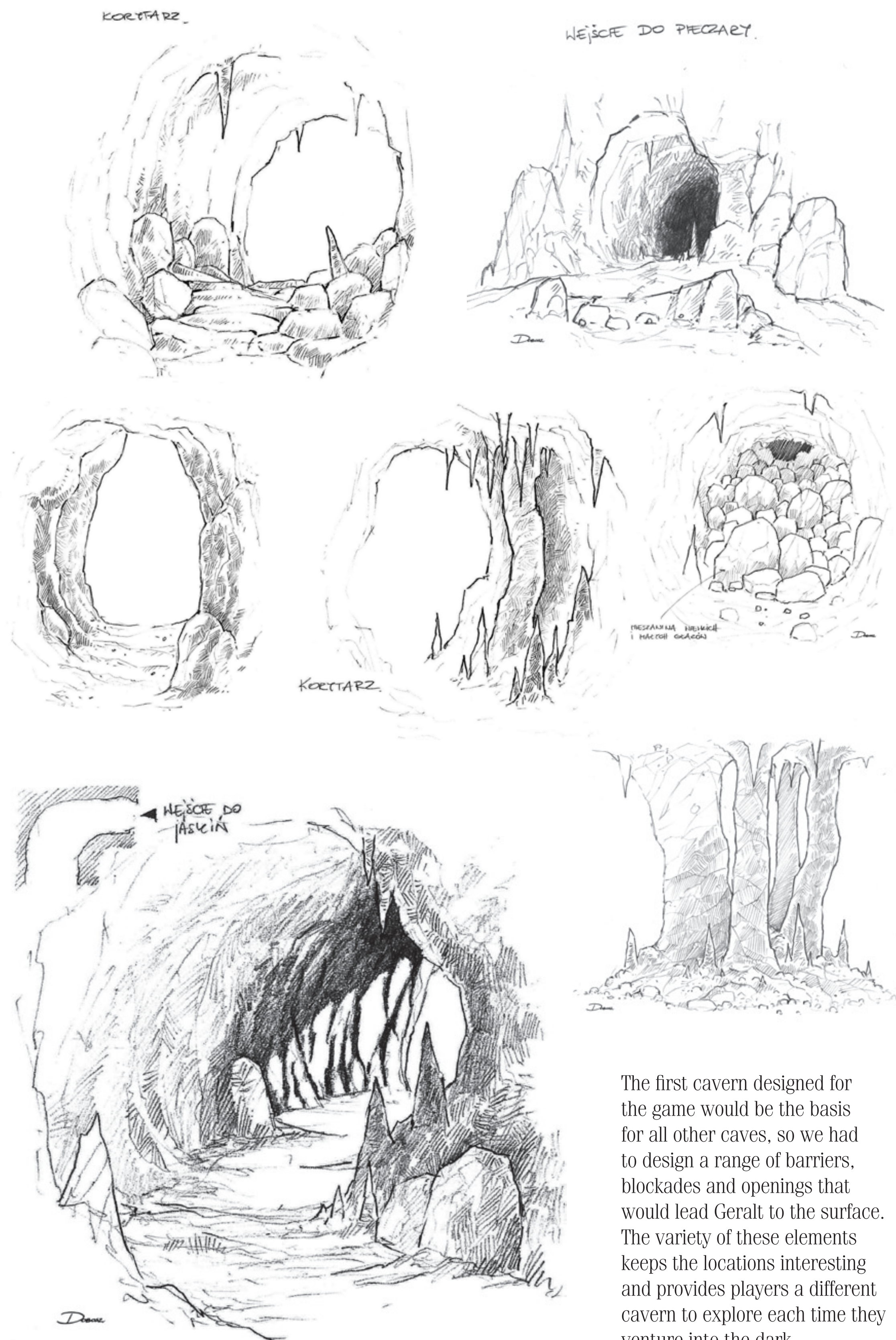


Salamandra breeds the monsters that terrorize Vizima in the kikimore cave. As with the catacombs, the design for this location served as the basis for all other caverns, though, of course, they do not feature the cocoons and eggs visible in this drawing.

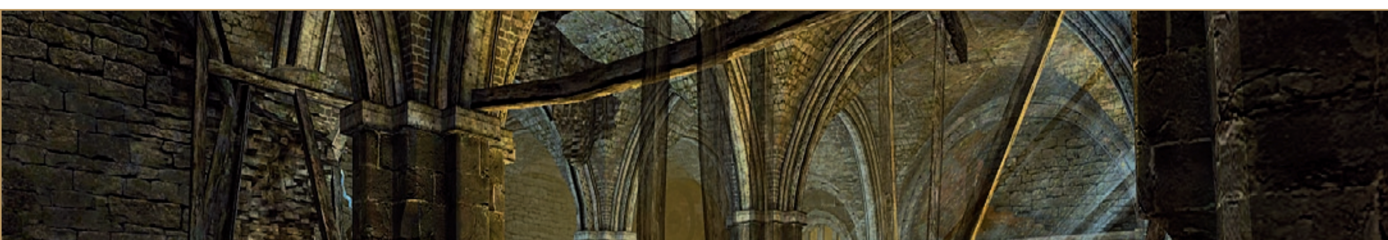


Note the detail with which the artist presents the process of breeding and hatching the little insectoids. For this location, designers created a fantastical biology of kikimores that included the principles governing the beasts' birth.





The first cavern designed for the game would be the basis for all other caves, so we had to design a range of barriers, blockades and openings that would lead Geralt to the surface. The variety of these elements keeps the locations interesting and provides players a different cavern to explore each time they venture into the dark.



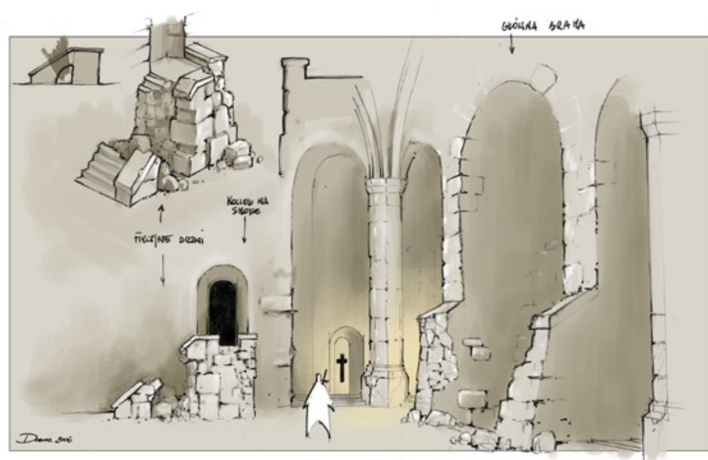
Kaer Morhen – Interior

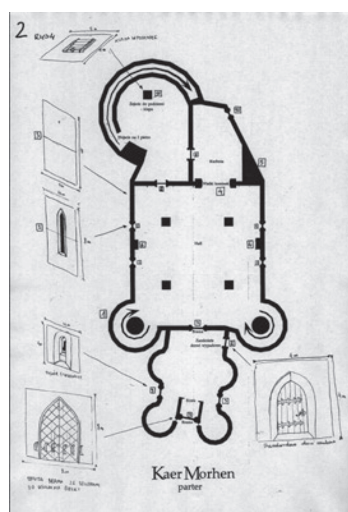
Ciri's chamber was a faithful copy of the witchers' quarters. It was empty like them, virtually lacking furnishings save a bed nailed together from several boards, a stool, and a trunk. Witchers adorned the walls and doors of their chambers with the hides of animals killed during hunts – deer, lynx, wolves, even wolverines. Upon the door of Ciri's chamber hung the hide of a mammoth rat with a repulsive scaled tail. Triss resisted the desire to tear the stinking skin off the door and fling it out the window.

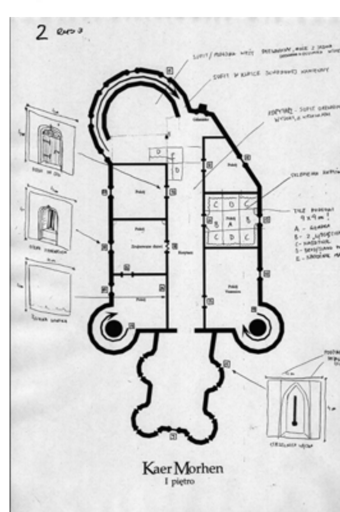
Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Blood of the Elves*

Inside Kaer Morhen, Geralt recovers his strength and with his friends' help recalls the basics of battle and casting Signs. As a young boy, Geralt was transformed into a witcher in the fortress laboratory. Years later, he returns to Kaer Morhen to begin life anew.









For a while now, Kaer Morhen has been an occasional home to a handful of witchers, none of whom bother with the fortress interior. They occupy only a few rooms – the wind occupies the rest. The kitchen is the most important chamber at Kaer Morhen. It is there that the witchers prepare their meals and gather in the evenings to warm their bones by the fire. On especially dreary winter nights, they might also indulge in drinking White Gull, a mildly hallucinogenic potion.





STOŁY, NA STOLE ROZGRZEBANE JEDZENIE
POD STOŁEM KOSZE I WORKI Z PROWIANTEM

MAŁY PIEC Z BLATEM, NA PIECU GARNKI
W POPRZEK WNĘKI SZNUR Z ZIOŁAMI

PÓŁKI NA ŚCIANACH

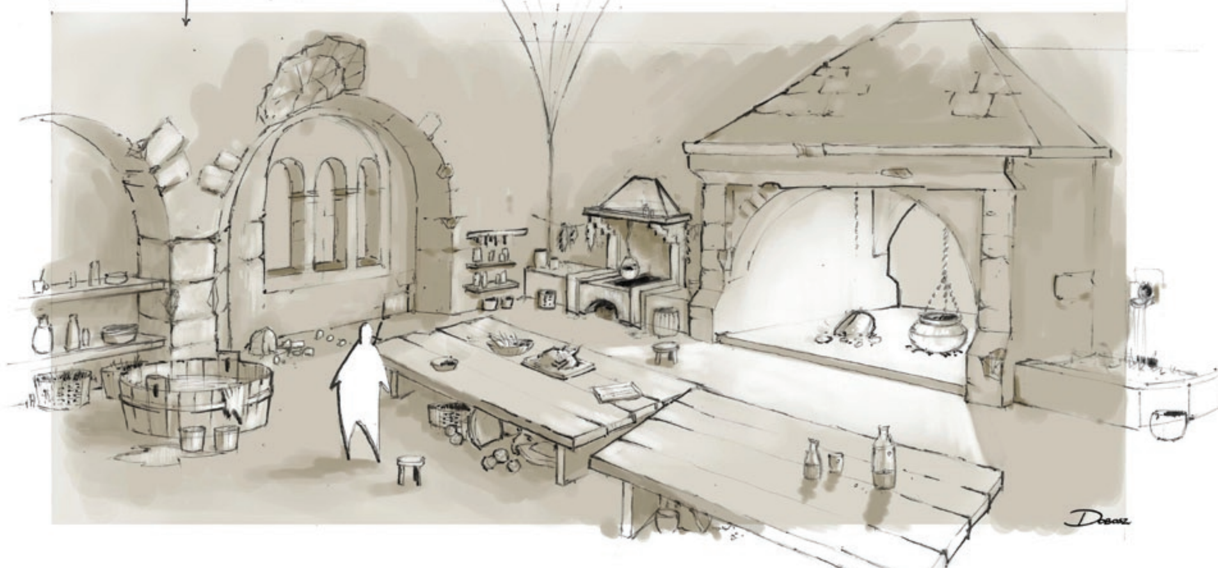
DREWNIANA BELKA Z ŁYŻKAMI WISZĄCYMI NA KOŁKACH

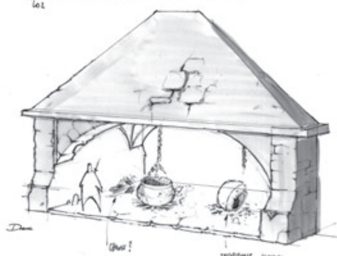
WIELKI KOMINEK

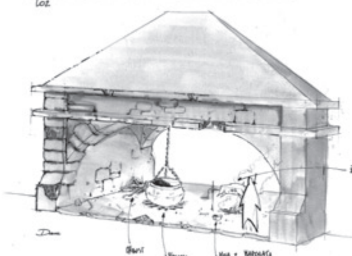
ZLEWAK Z PŁYNĄCĄ WODĄ, W ŚRODKU GARY I DZBANKI DO MYCIA

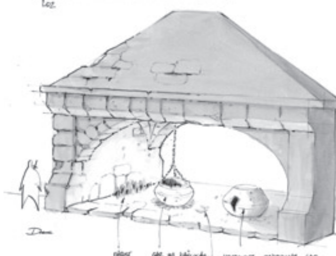
PÓŁKI WE WNĘCE, NA GÓRZE BUTELKI
NA DOLE SKRZYNKI I KOSZE Z
JEDZENIEM

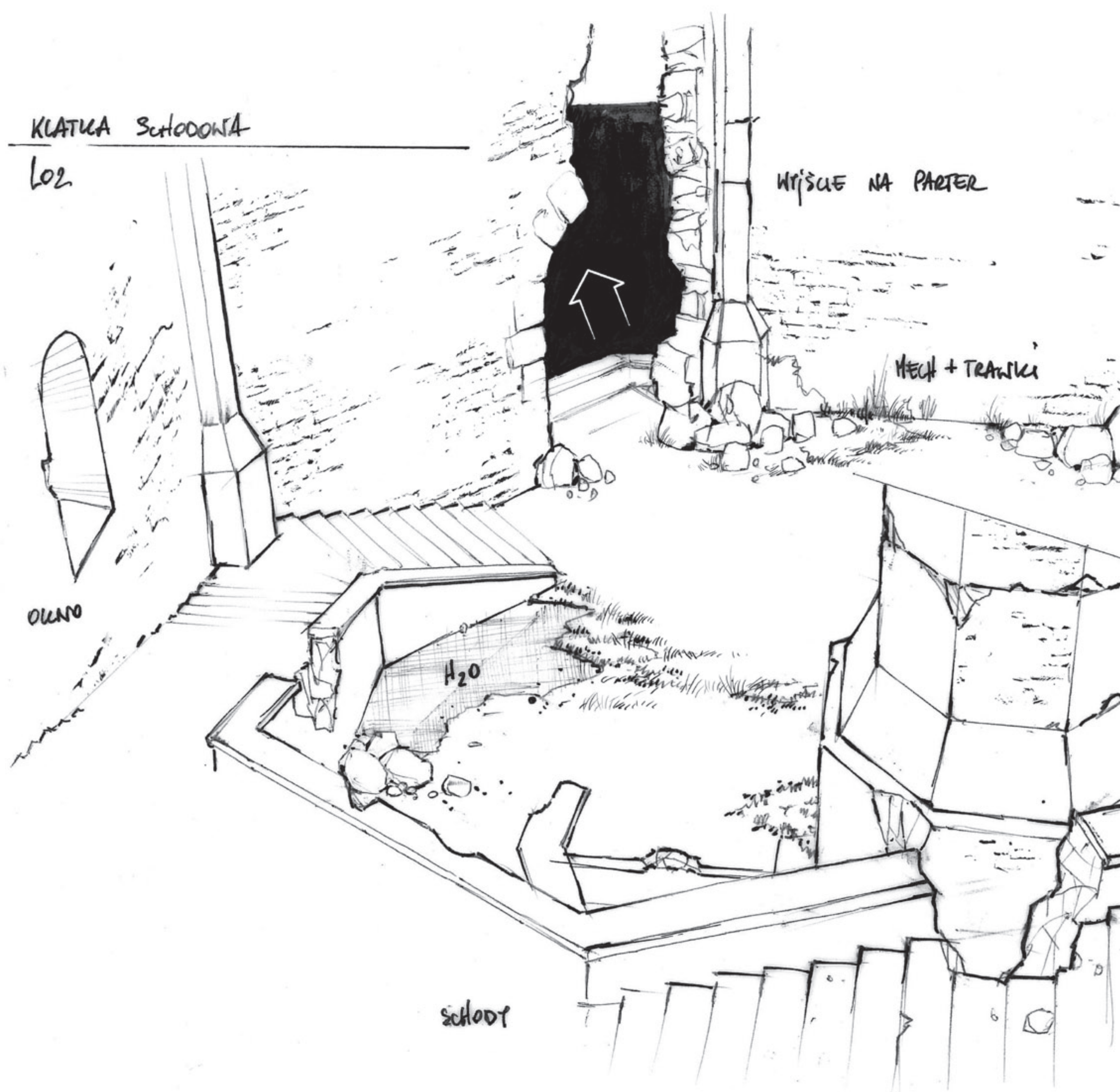
BALIA Z CIEPŁĄ WODĄ





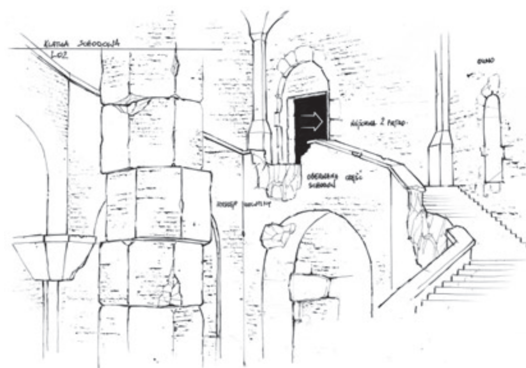


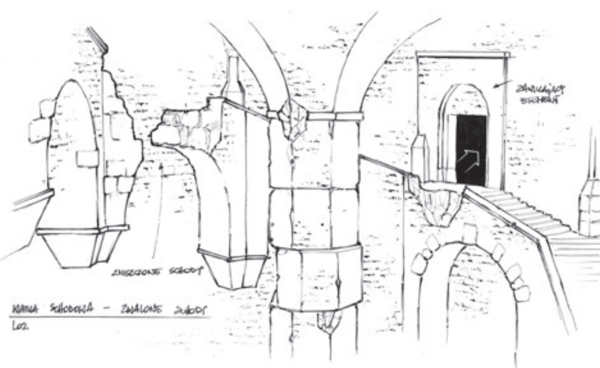


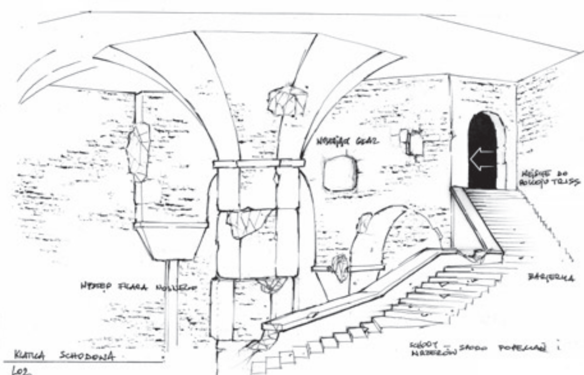


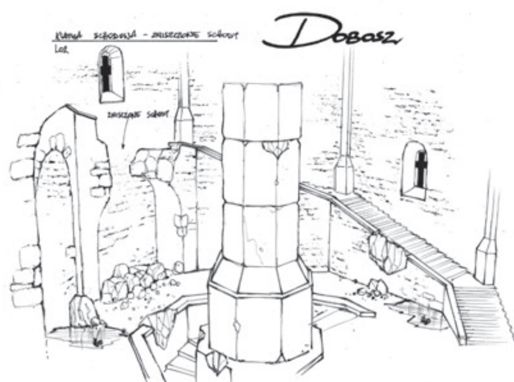
The witchers hardly fret about Kaer Morhen's declining condition. The few left know all too well that they are members of a disappearing caste and rebuilding the fortress would make little sense. Holes and rubble litter the interior – signs of the riot and the passage of time. In the game's Prologue, Geralt can move about Kaer Morhen freely, finding signs of the past glory of the witchers' stronghold and home. Its vast size is revealed as one ventures through its labyrinth of stairwells, corridors and levels.

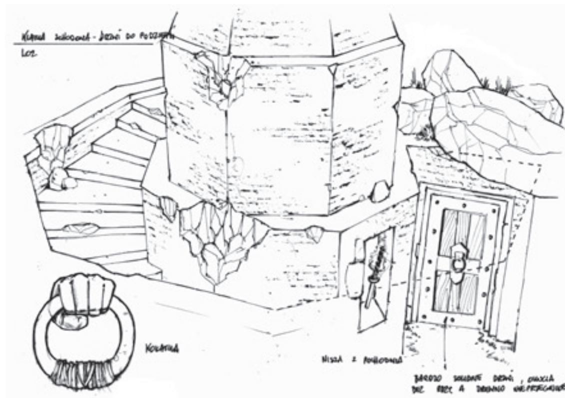

GRUZOWISKO





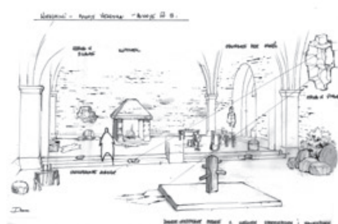


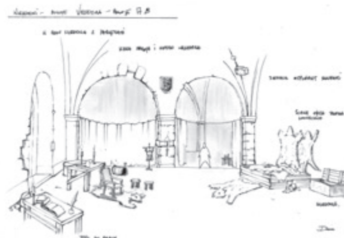

Dobosz

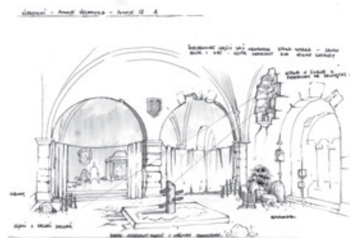


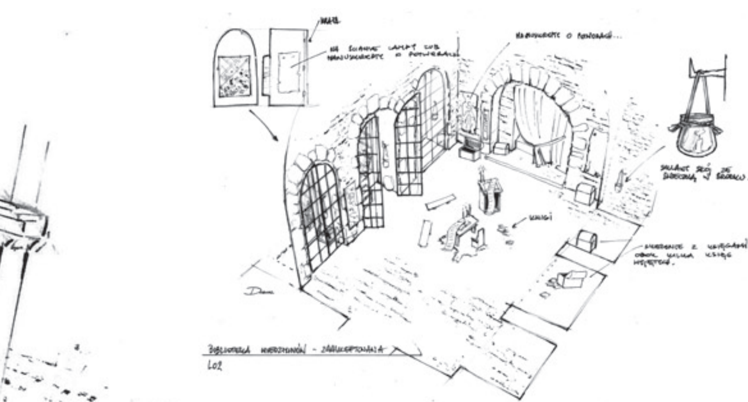
WIEDZMINI – SYPIALNIA WIEDZMINÓW – POW. NR 02
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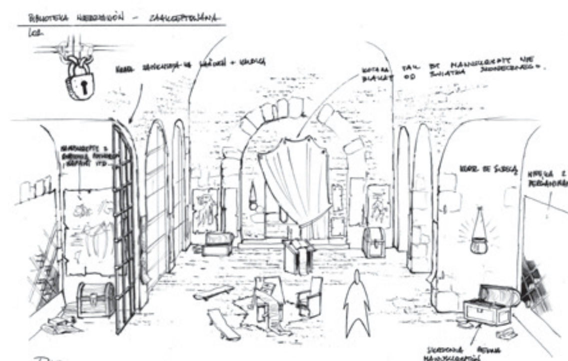
Dobosz

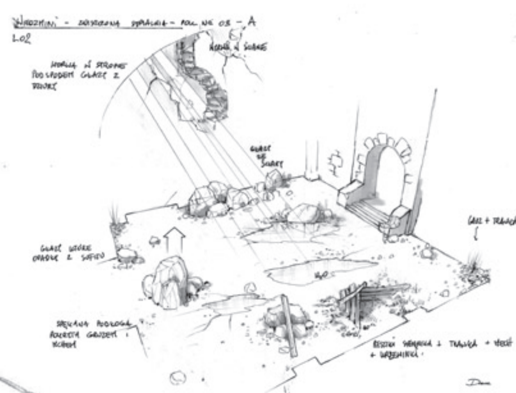


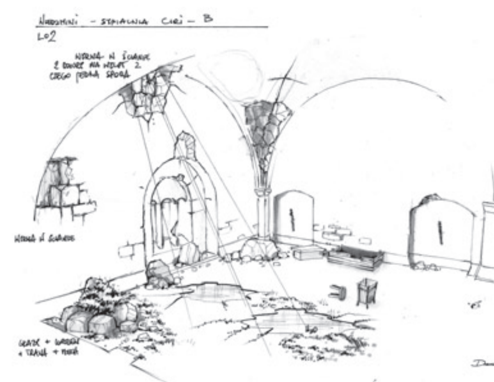


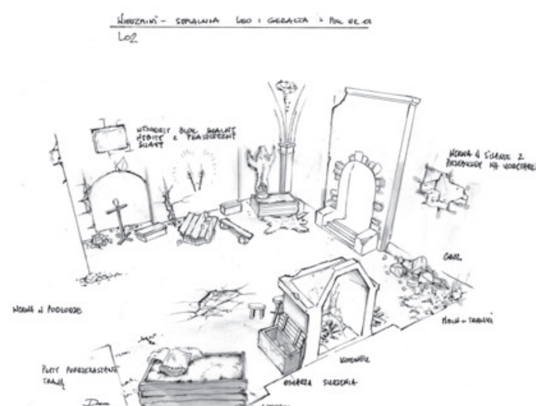


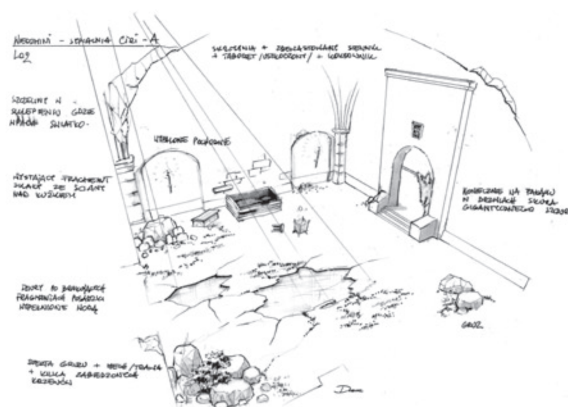




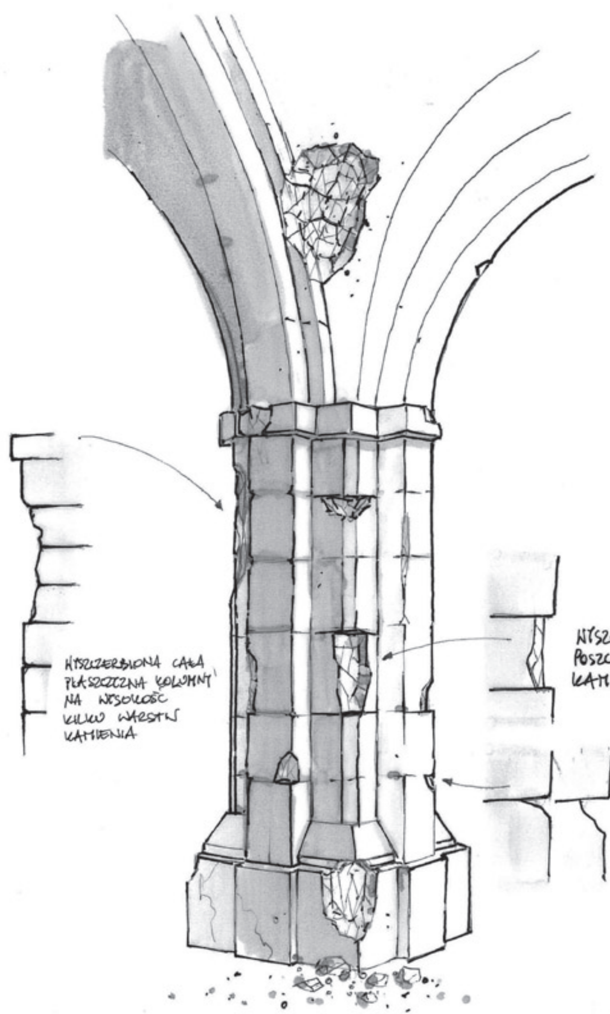




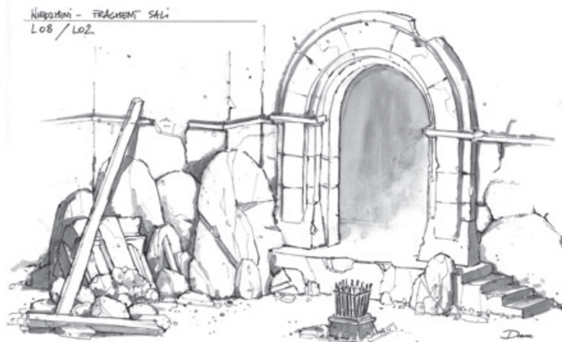




Kaer Morhen's residents occupy few of its chambers and care little for comfort. This is a witcher's room. Most of the furniture is rotting while animal hides and weapons are the only decorative accents. Several other chambers are located on the level the witchers still use, and each is furnished differently. These spaces include an evening hall, library, and armory. The names are outdated as the rooms no longer fulfill their functions. The sorceress Triss Merigold occupies by far the best chamber, the only one to contain a solid bed and a few comforts.

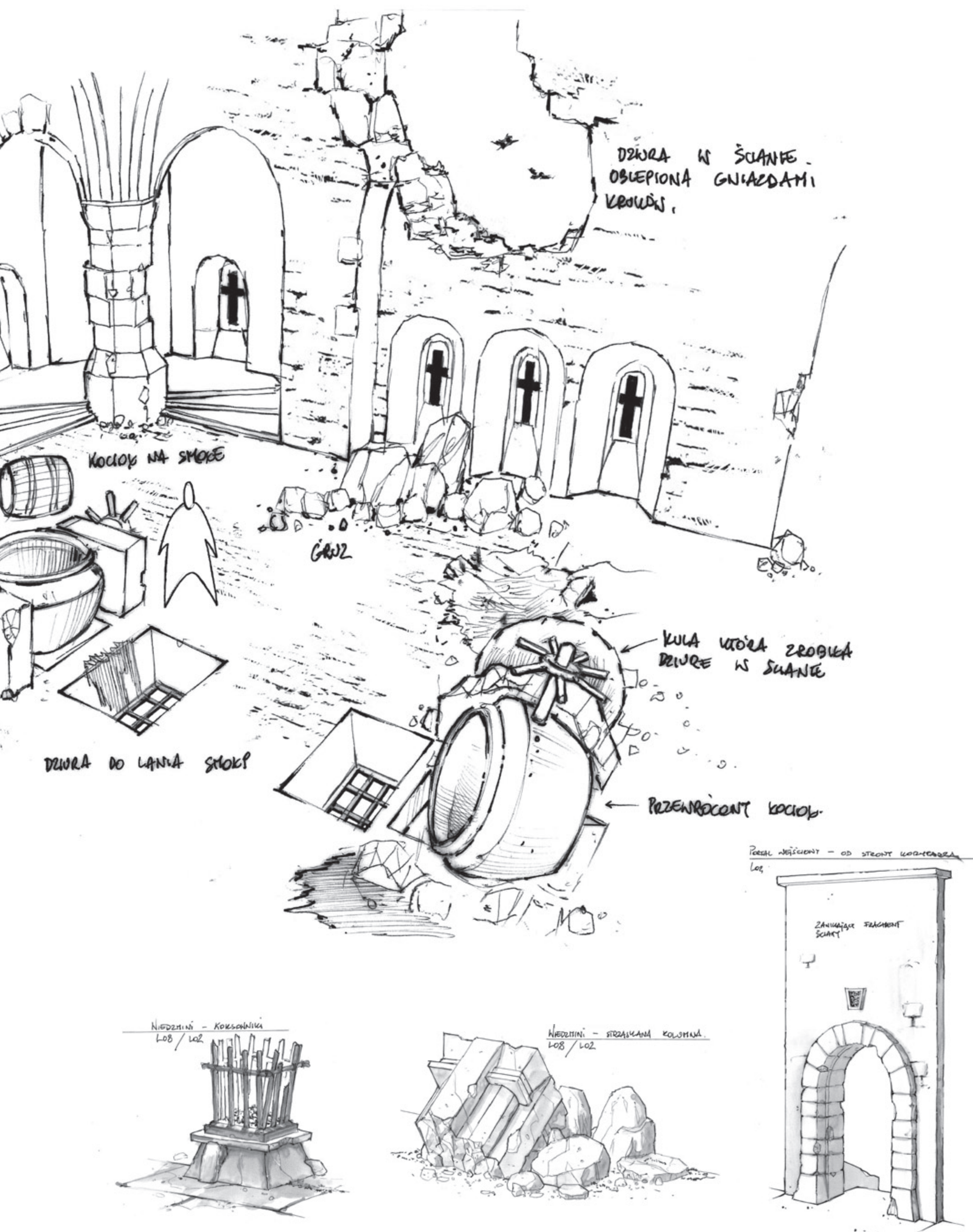






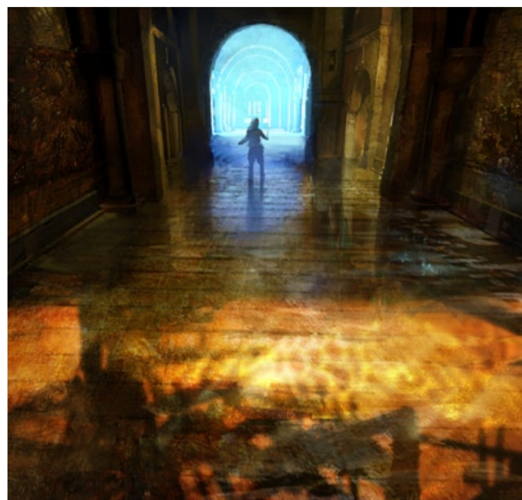
The space above Kaer Morhen's gate was designed for its defenders, thus the presence of siege cauldrons and oriels with cruciform openings.

Barrels that once contained provisions and ammunition for the garrison now lie smashed, littering the floor. A catapult projectile has knocked a large hole in the chamber wall.


DZIURA W ŚCIANIE
OBLEPIONA GNIAZDAMI
KRUKÓW.
KOCIOŁ NA SMOŁĘ
GRUZ
KULA KTÓRA ZROBIŁA
DZIURĘ W ŚCIANIE
DZIURA DO LANIA SMOŁY
PRZEWRÓCONY KOCIOŁ.



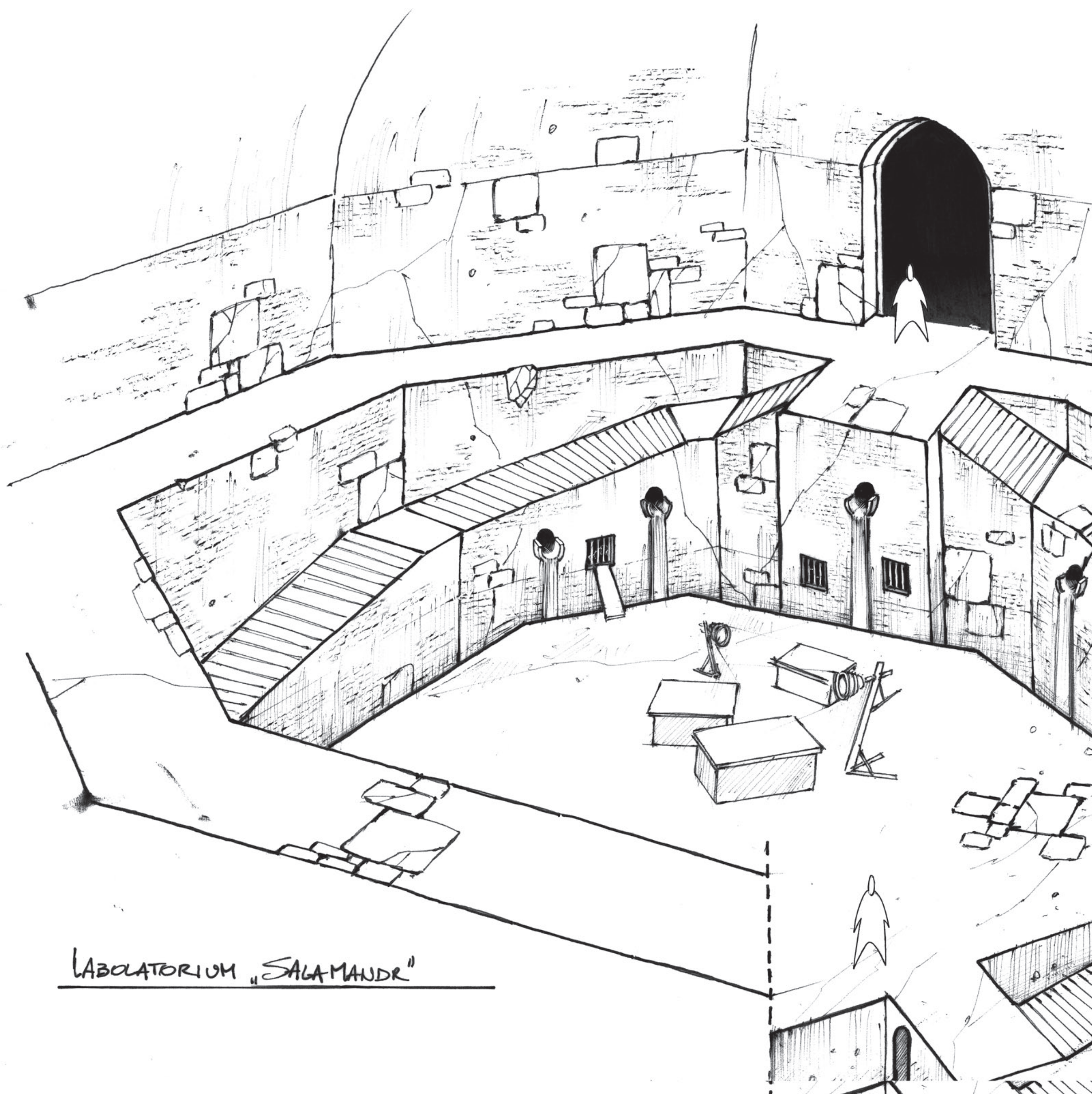


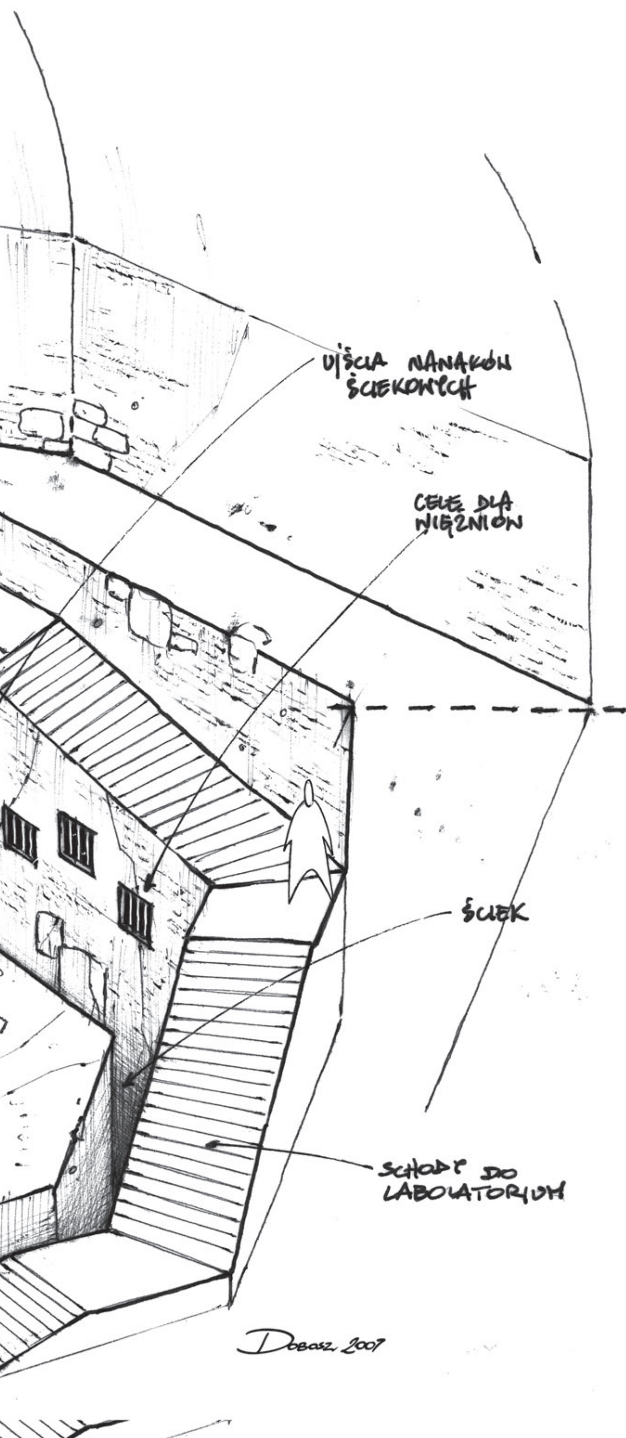


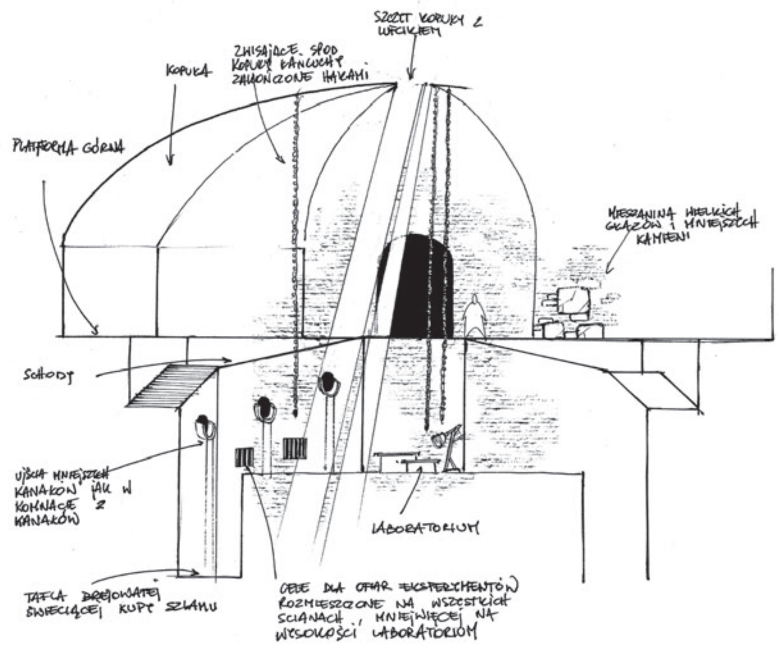


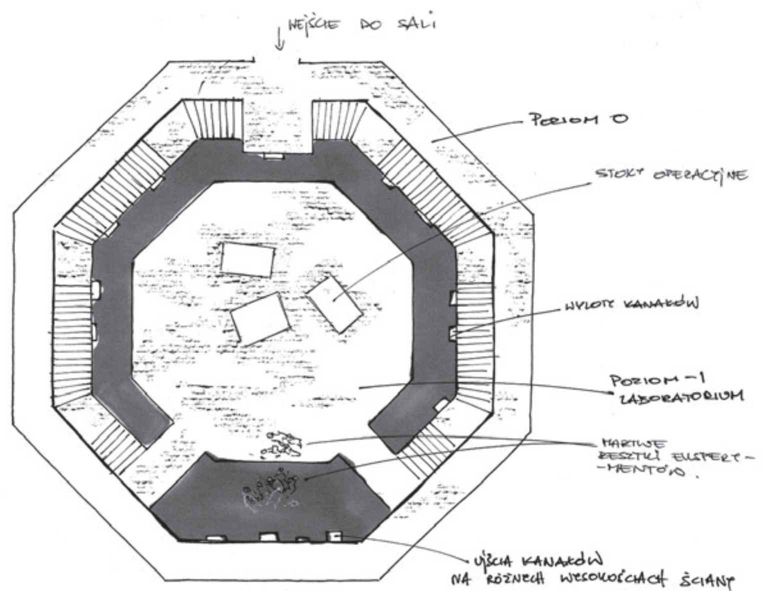
INSIDE SALAMANDRA

Geralt defeats his chief nemesis Azar Javed in Salamandra's underground laboratory, thus gaining a new and even more powerful foe. This location differs from other underground sites – phosphorescent lighting and unusual architecture make one's skin crawl as Geralt explores the space.

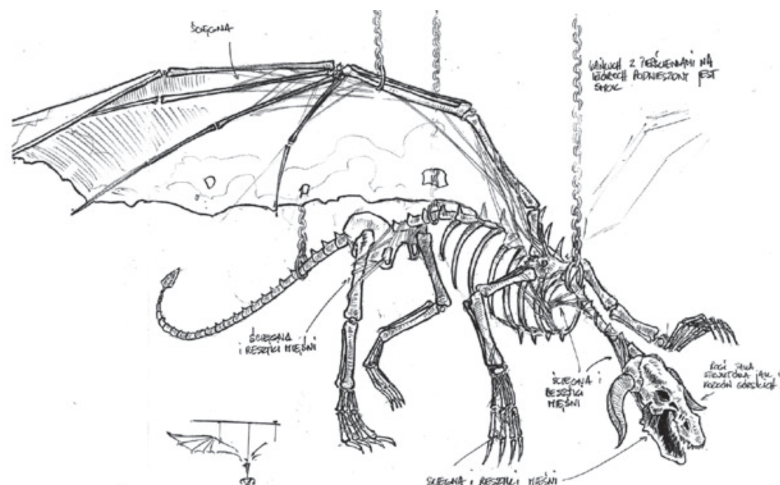

LABOLATORIUM „SALAMANDR"

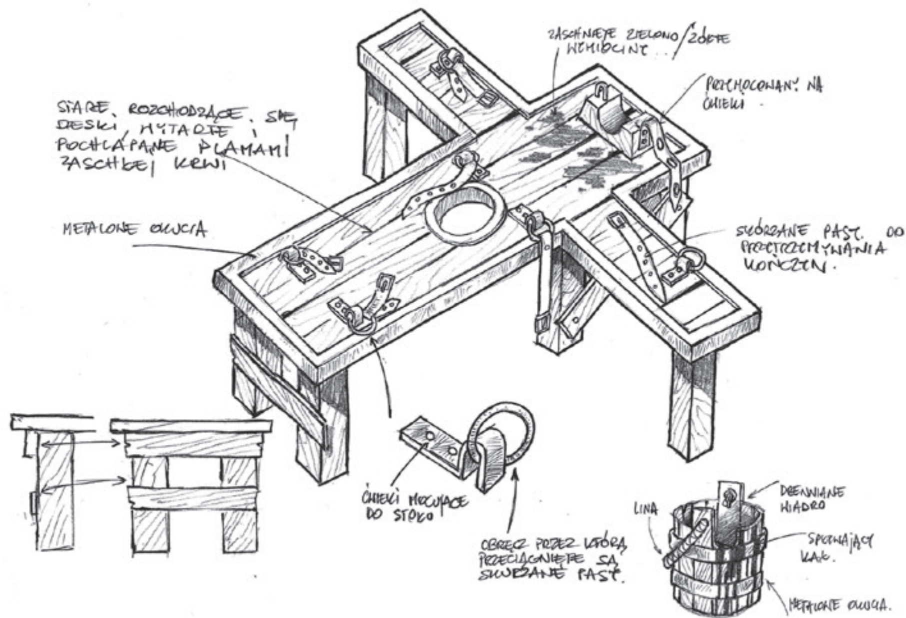

UJŚCIA KANAŁÓW ŚCIEKOWYCH
CELE DLA WIĘŹNIÓW
ŚCIEK
SCHODY DO LABOLATORIUM
Dobosz 2007

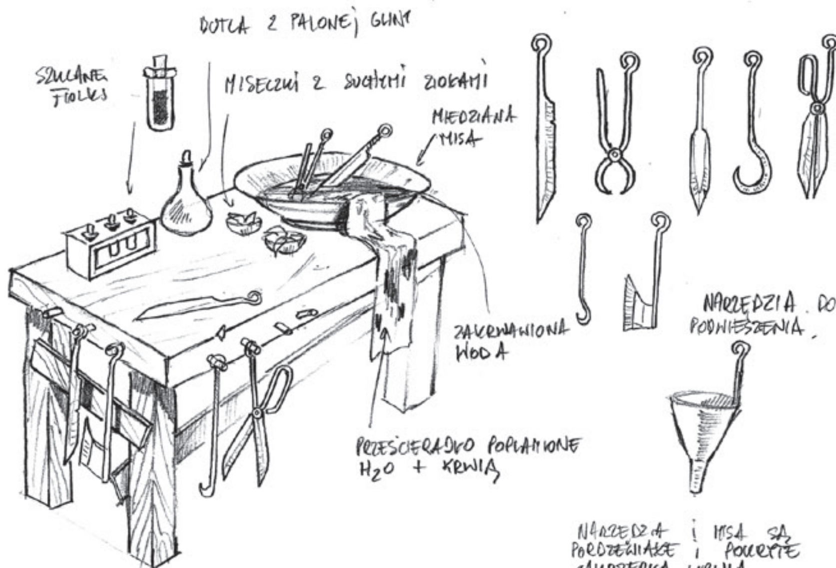

SZCZYT KOPUŁY Z WŁAZEM
KOPUŁA
PLATFORMA GÓRNA
SCHODY
LABORATORIUM
CELE DLA OFIAR EKSPERYMENTÓW ROZMIESZCZONE NA WSZYSTKICH ŚCIANACH, MNIEJWIĘCEJ NA WYSOKOŚCI LABORATORIUM

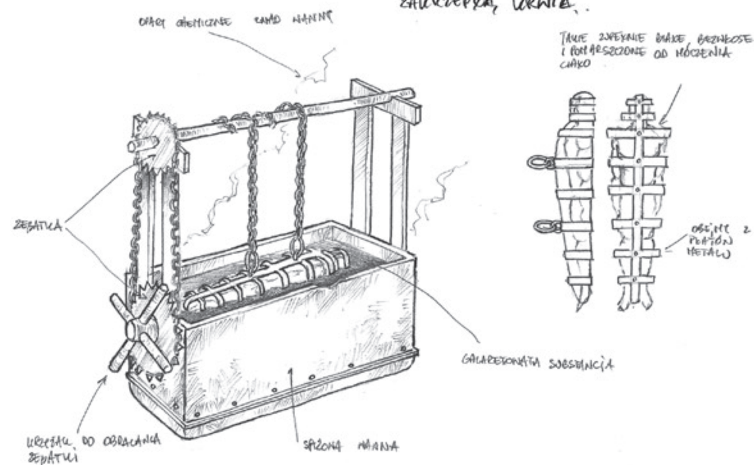

WEJŚCIE DO SALI
POZIOM 0
STOŁY OPERACYJNE
WYLOTY KANAŁÓW
POZIOM -1
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NA RÓŻNYCH WYSOKOŚCIACH ŚCIANY

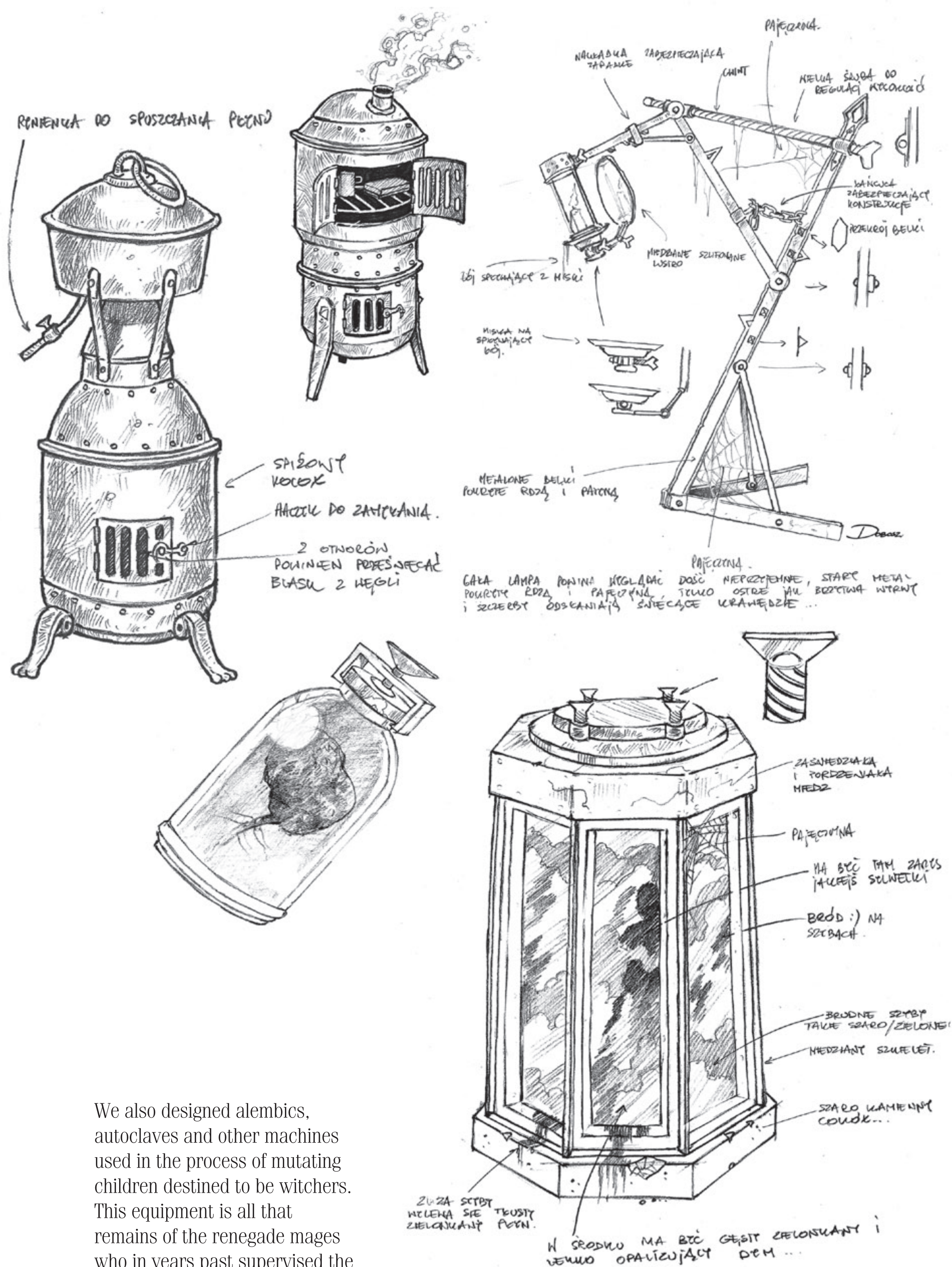
Sapkowski never described in detail the witchers' laboratory at Kaer Morhen, upon which Salamandra based its lab for mutation experiments. His writings provide some information about the substances used in the mutation process. The artists were eager to design the laboratory furnishings and especially the herbs cultivated inside. Note that the witchers' plants are not a product of the designers' fancy. Though varied and often fantastical, each is based on a real, though hardly common plant.



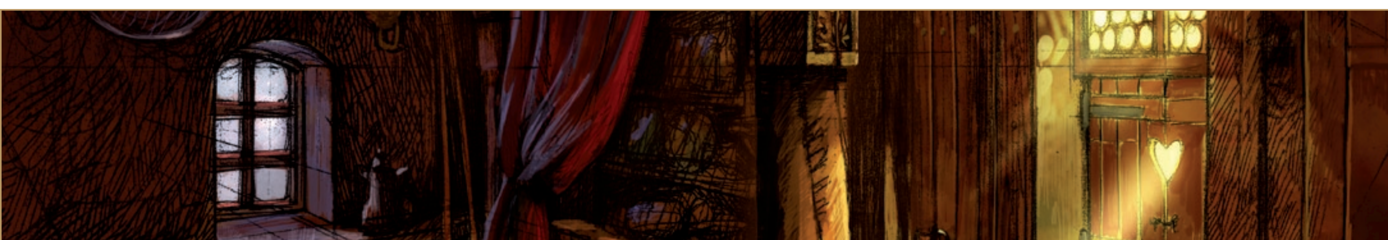

ZASCHNIĘTE ZIELONO/ŻÓŁTE WYMIOCINY..
STARE, ROZCHODZĄCE SIĘ DESKI, WYTARTE I POCHLAPANE PLAMAMI ZASCHŁEJ KRWI
PRZYMOCOWANY NA ĆWIEKI.
METALOWE OKUCIA
SKÓRZANE PASY DO PRZYTRZYMYWANIA KOŃCZYN.
ĆWIEKI MOCUJĄCE DO STOŁU
OBRĘCZ PRZEZ KTÓRĄ PRZECIĄGNIĘTE SĄ SKÓRZANE PASY.
LINA
DREWNIANE WIADRO
METALOWE OKUCIA.


BUTLA Z PALONEJ GLINY
SZKLANE FIOLKI
MISECZKI Z SUCHYMI ZIOŁAMI
MIEDZIANA MISA
ZAKRWAWIONA WODA
PRZEŚCIERADŁO POPLAMIONE H_2O + KRWIĄ
NARZĘDZIA DO PODWIESZENIA.
NARZĘDZIA I MISA SĄ PORDZEWIAŁE I POKRYTE ZAKRZEPŁĄ KRWIĄ..


OPARY CHEMICZNE ZNAD WANNY
TAKIE ZUPEŁNIE BIAŁE, BEZWŁOSE I POMARSZCZONE OD MOCZENIA CIAŁO
ZĘBATKA
GALARETOWATA SUBSTANCJA
KRZYŻAK DO OBRACANIA ZĘBATKI



We also designed alembics, autoclaves and other machines used in the process of mutating children destined to be witchers. This equipment is all that remains of the renegade mages who in years past supervised the Trial of the Grasses.



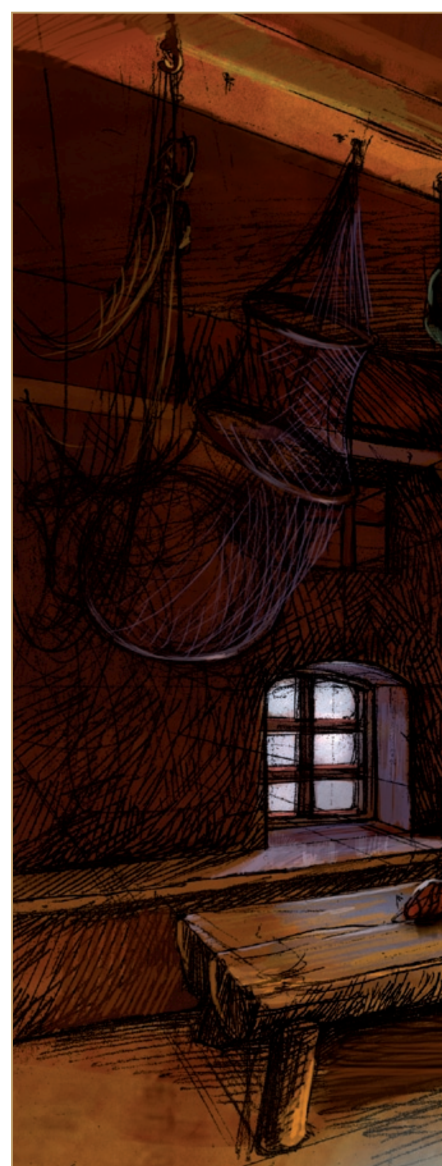
TAVERNS

Taverns are special locations, serving as safe havens, places to rest, store currently unneeded items, or prepare for battling monsters. While at an inn, Geralt can hear gossip about current events and important locals, flirt with a waitress, or meet characters willing to give him a job. Late in the day when a tavern is empty, employment might be found by reading offers posted by locals on the notice board outside. Taverns and inns are busiest in the afternoon. Guests include gamblers ready to empty one's pouch, fist fighters eager to try their luck in a boxing match, even drunkards willing to knock back a few with the famed Geralt of Rivia. These are but a few of the attractions on offer.





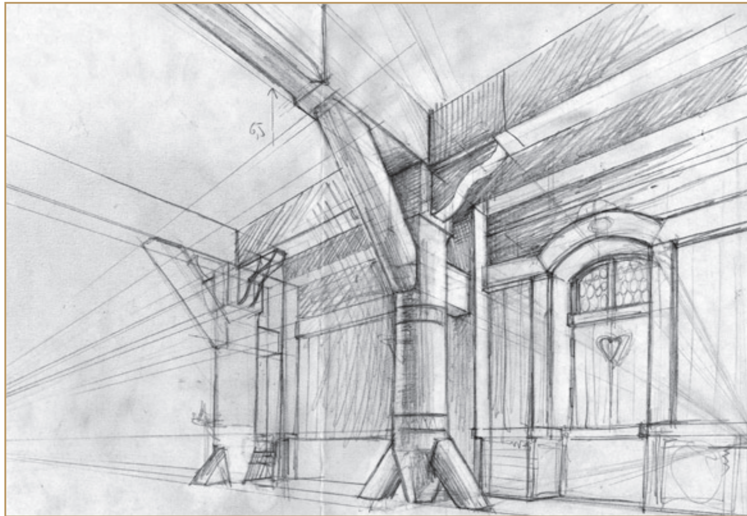


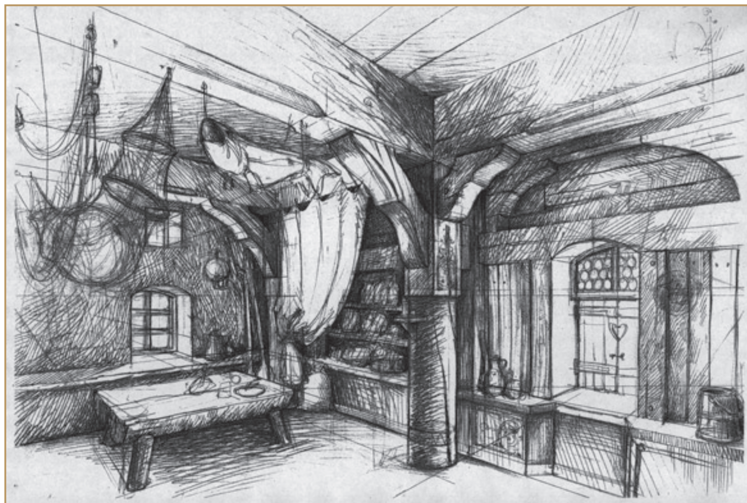






The game's country inn is based on photographs taken at the Museum of the Mazovian Countryside in Sierpc. We wanted to capture the realities and mood of the old building – its architecture, furnishings, and lighting. This colorful country house, with its varied furnishings, corners, and array of regular guests, proves a beautiful and rich location.







The illustrations present how the country inn evolved, from conceptual sketches to its final form. The first sketch details the architecture of the building's interior – walls and posts, the shape of windows.

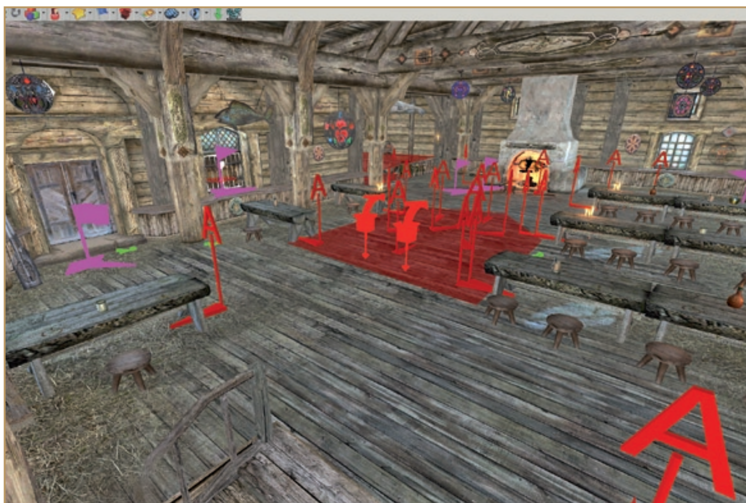
In the second sketch, the artist has added ambiance, depicting furnishings, tableware, and decorative elements that render the interior more familiar and cozy. Note the original decorations – netting hung from the ceiling to dry, pumpkins, and vessels lined up on shelves.

The third illustration presents the three-dimensional mesh produced prior to the model. It is a faithful technical rendition of the conceptual sketch.



The model of the interior is the base for the next phase. The first image on this page depicts the model with lighting. This step is as important as decoration, as lighting actually begins to turn the tavern into the second-rate dive we wanted to create.

What would an inn be without guests? Once finished, the interior is handed over to designers who must populate it. The second image features the location as it appears in the game editor; the red elements are action points, spawn points and triggers – used to insert characters like the innkeeper, the waitress, and numerous guests: peasants, merchants, drunkards, gamblers, fist fighters, even dogs. The hubbub of patrons eating, drinking, and conversing, the bustle of servers milling about, lend life to the inn. The last illustration presents the inn in its final form.



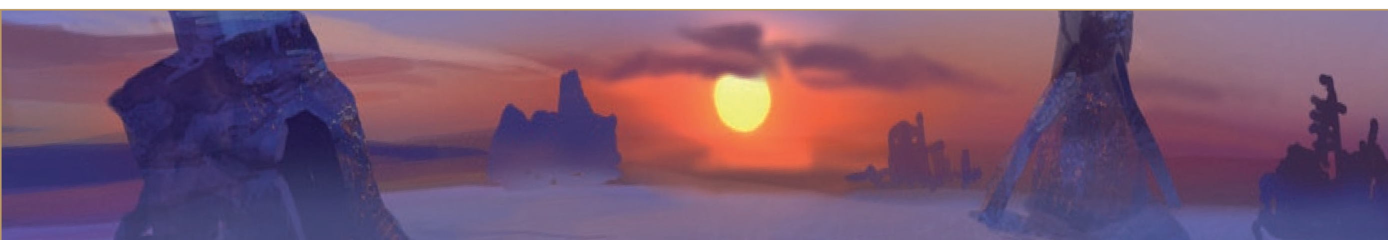








These images present several exterior views of the inn. A stockade surrounds the building, ensuring the safety of its guests, while a well and crane can be seen in the yard. Farm equipment, barrels, and traders' wagons are dispersed about. Erected at the roadside, the inn serves residents of the nearby village and travelers from all corners of the world heading for Vizima. A sign at the crossroad points them in the right direction. The bottom image depicts the roadside inn at night. Torches burn before the entrance, but darkness reigns beyond the palisade no matter how hard one strains one's eyes. After dusk, the witcher has much to do out there…



Ice Plains

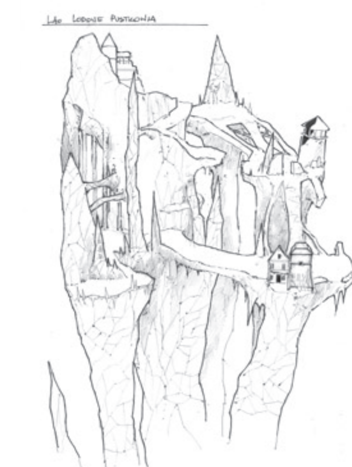
I say to you that the age of the sword and axe, the age of the wolf's blizzard is nigh. The Time of the White Frost and White Light approaches, the Time of Madness and Disdain, Tedd Deireadh, the Final Age. The world will perish amidst ice and be reborn with the new sun. It will be reborn of the Elder Blood, of Hen Ichaer, of the sown seed that will not sprout but burst into flames.
Ess'tuath esse! So shall it be! Observe the signs! I shall reveal their nature: first, the earth will run with Aen Seidhe, the Blood of the Elves…

Aen Ithlinnespeath,
The Prophecy of Ithlinne Aegli aep Aevenien

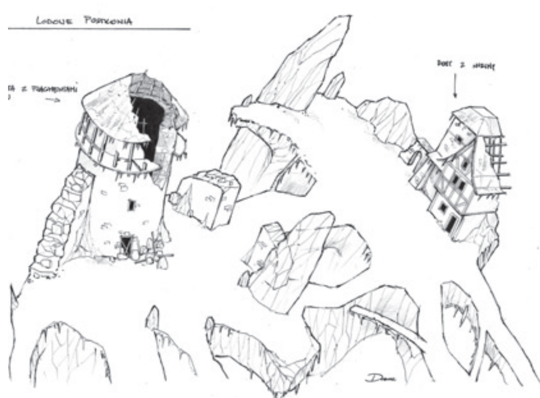
In the game's Epilogue, Geralt enters the Ice Plains. They are not a real place, but a vision born in the mind of a madman. Magic assists the witcher to arrive here. The madman's vision is so strong as to grant him control of this environment. His hatred for Geralt is great, and he pits him against phantasms capable of wounding and killing. Though mere elements of the madman's vision, the blizzards and ice avalanches of this place can prove deadly. In the Ice Plains, the witcher encounters apparitions of characters he met before. It is here that he comes to terms with his own actions and confronts his arch enemy.



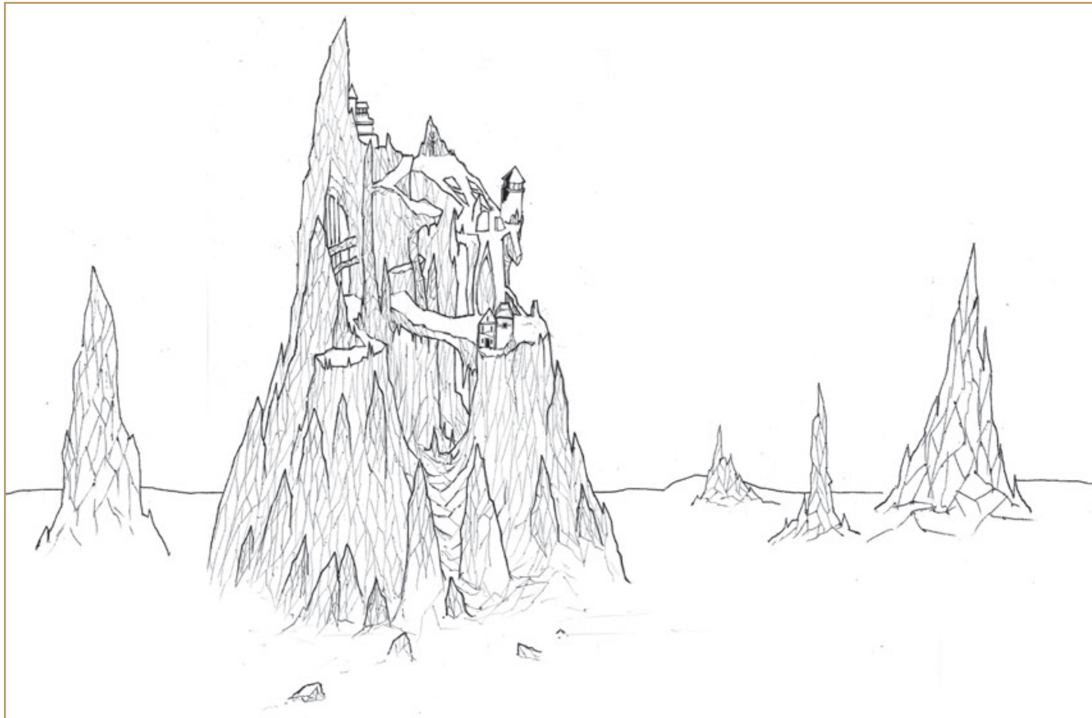
The Ice Plains, the site for the dramatic events of the game's Epilogue, were the last location to be created. We needed to make a strong impression on players who got to the end of the game, a lasting impression that would leave gamers feeling awed by *The Witcher* as a whole. The script called for Geralt to pursue his main adversary, while running into familiar characters and other foes along the way. In the location as designed, Geralt must ascend a mountain, cross ice-clad bridges and rocky shelves. The clay model on the left was our prototype.

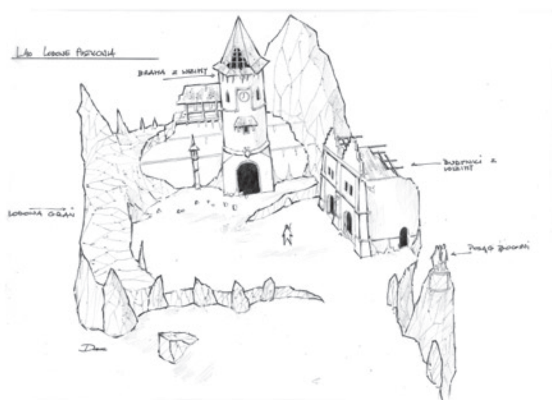




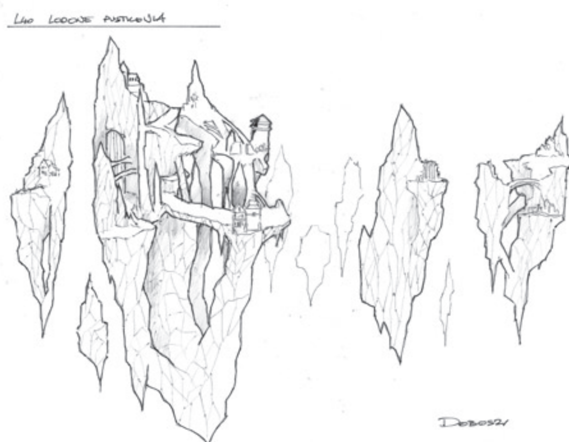




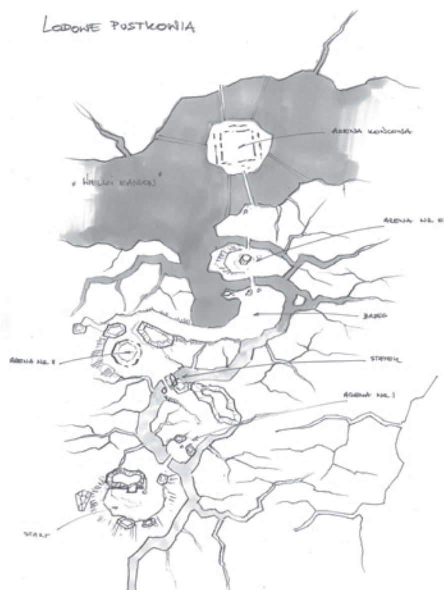




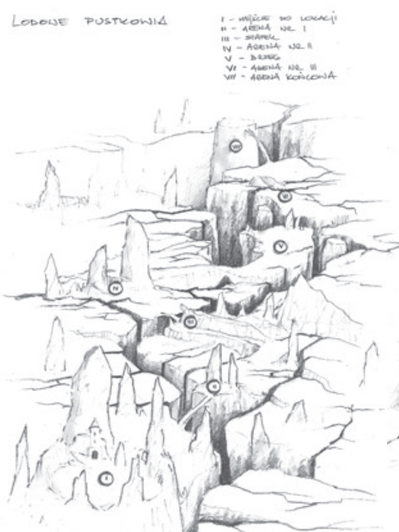

DOBOSZ

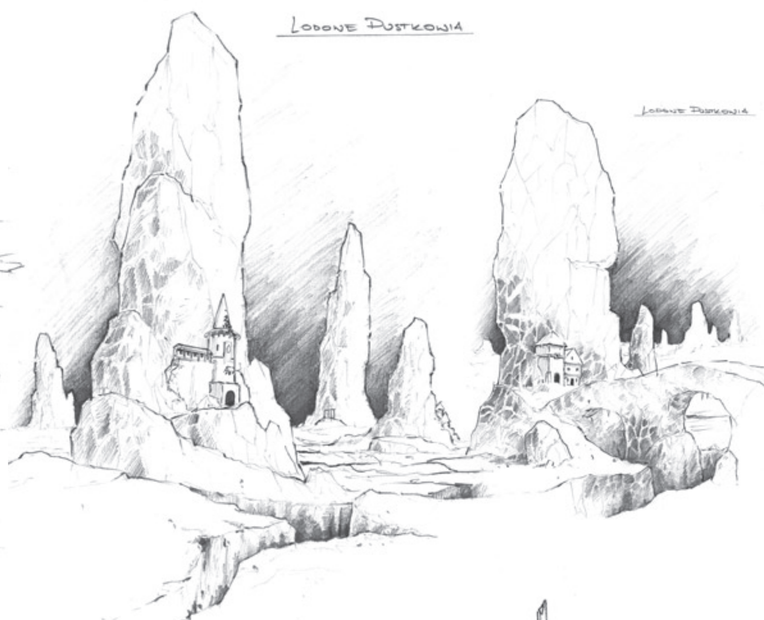

DOBOSZ



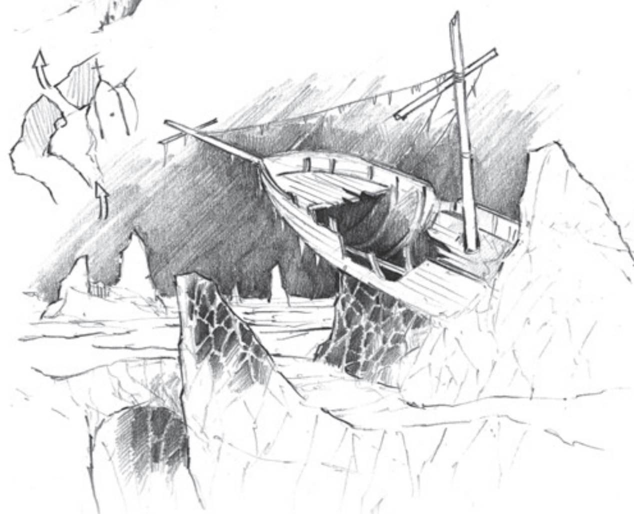


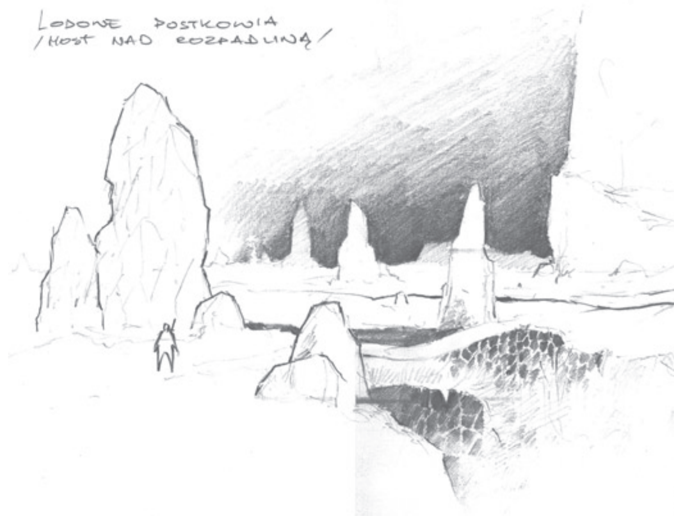
The Ice Plains are a vision of a distant future. The Grand Master, inspired by the Prophecy of Ithlinne, believes an ice age will destroy the world. Civilization will be buried beneath mounds of snow, while humans will evolve into skullheads – strong, primitive ape-men. Careful players will discover familiar buildings in this setting. Destroyed and ice-clad, they remain recognizable. Each of the illustrated icy islands is a combat arena where monsters attack or a meeting place with a character from a previous game chapter. Rubble and other remnants of civilization can be seen. The final struggle on the mountain top plays out within the ruins of King Foltest's palace, recognizable for its characteristic arcades.



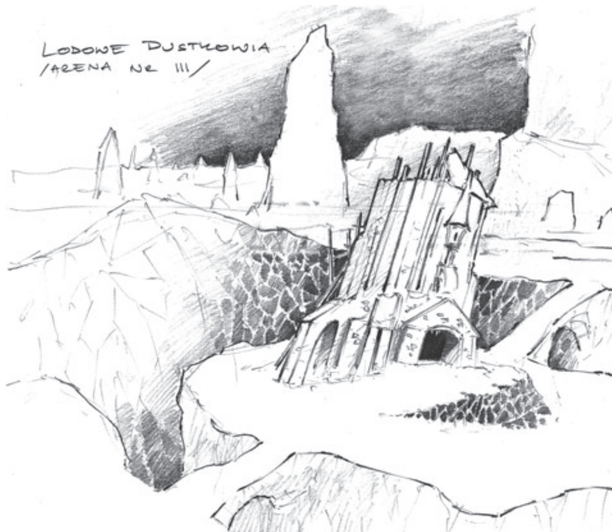


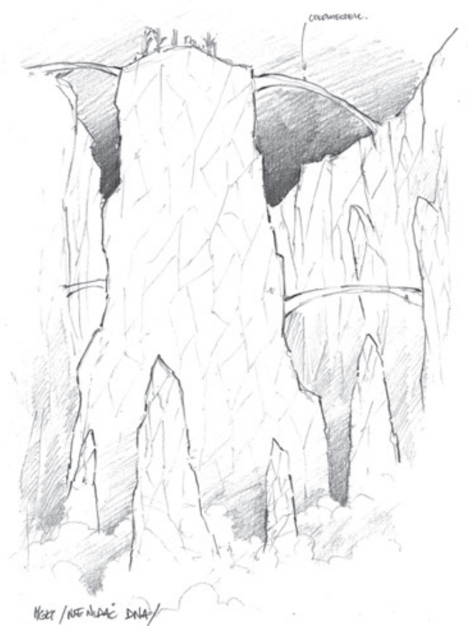


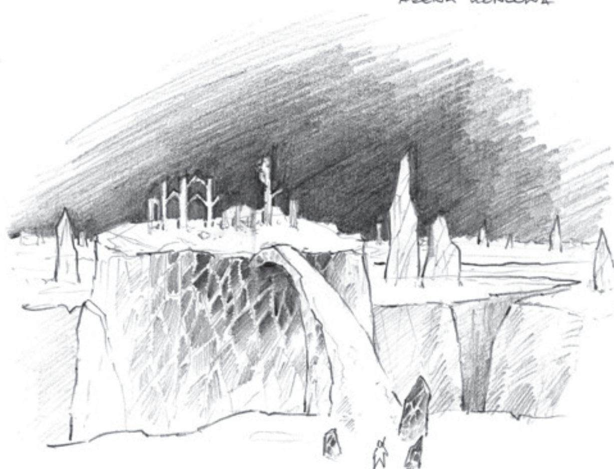


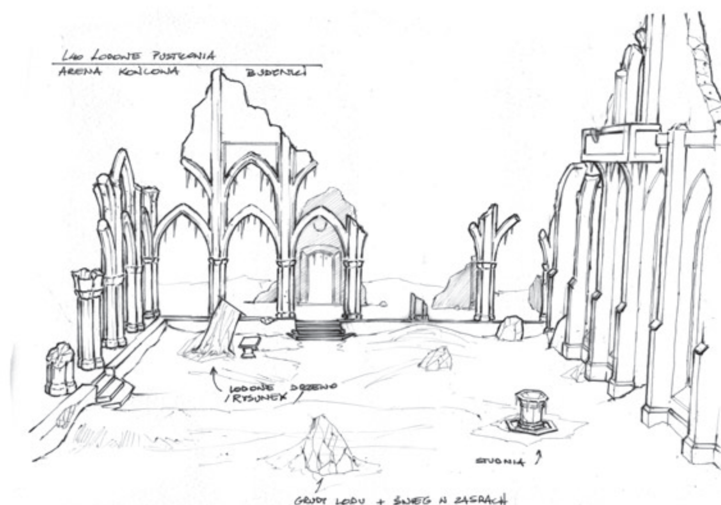

LODOWE POSTKOWIA
/MOST NAD ROZPADLINĄ/

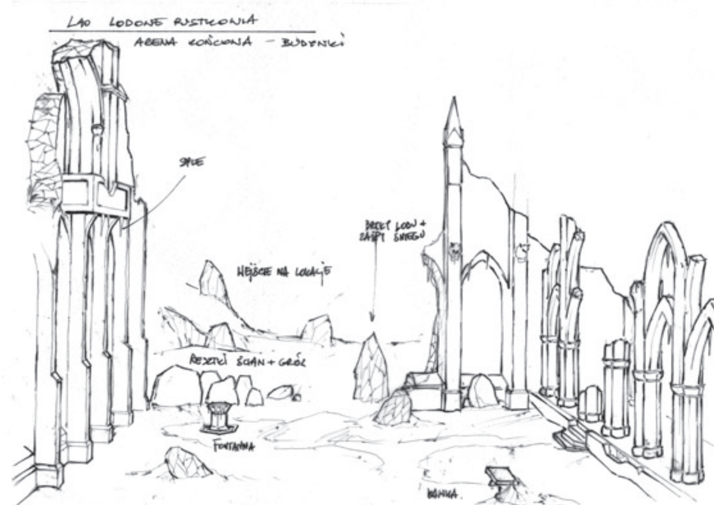

SCHODY
BYSTRZENY ZAMARZNIĘTE
ZAMARZNIĘTA RZEKA

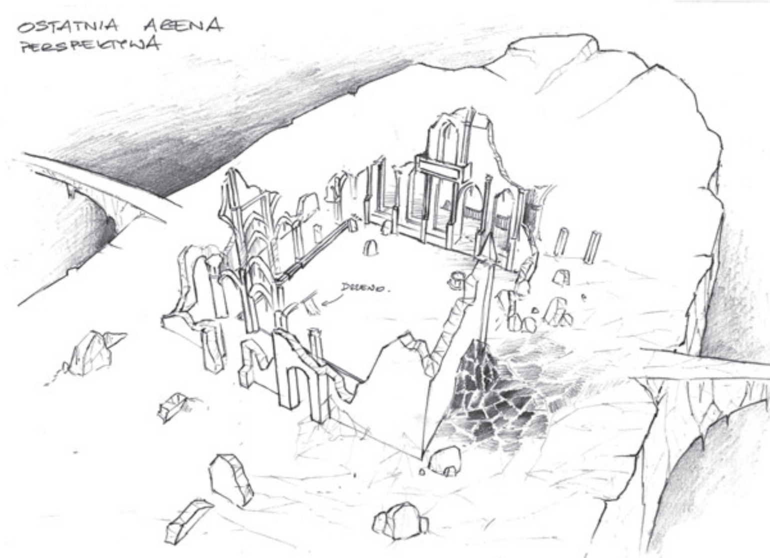

LODOWE DUSTKOWIA
/ARENA NR III/


OSTATNIA ARENA


LODOWE POSTKOWIA
ARENA KOŃCOWA







In perhaps the game's most important fight, Geralt faces two antagonists in a dazzling setting. The ruins of King Foltest's palace, perched atop an ice-clad peak, serve as the arena. This meticulously executed location is the backdrop for Geralt's final struggle against his nemesis, his

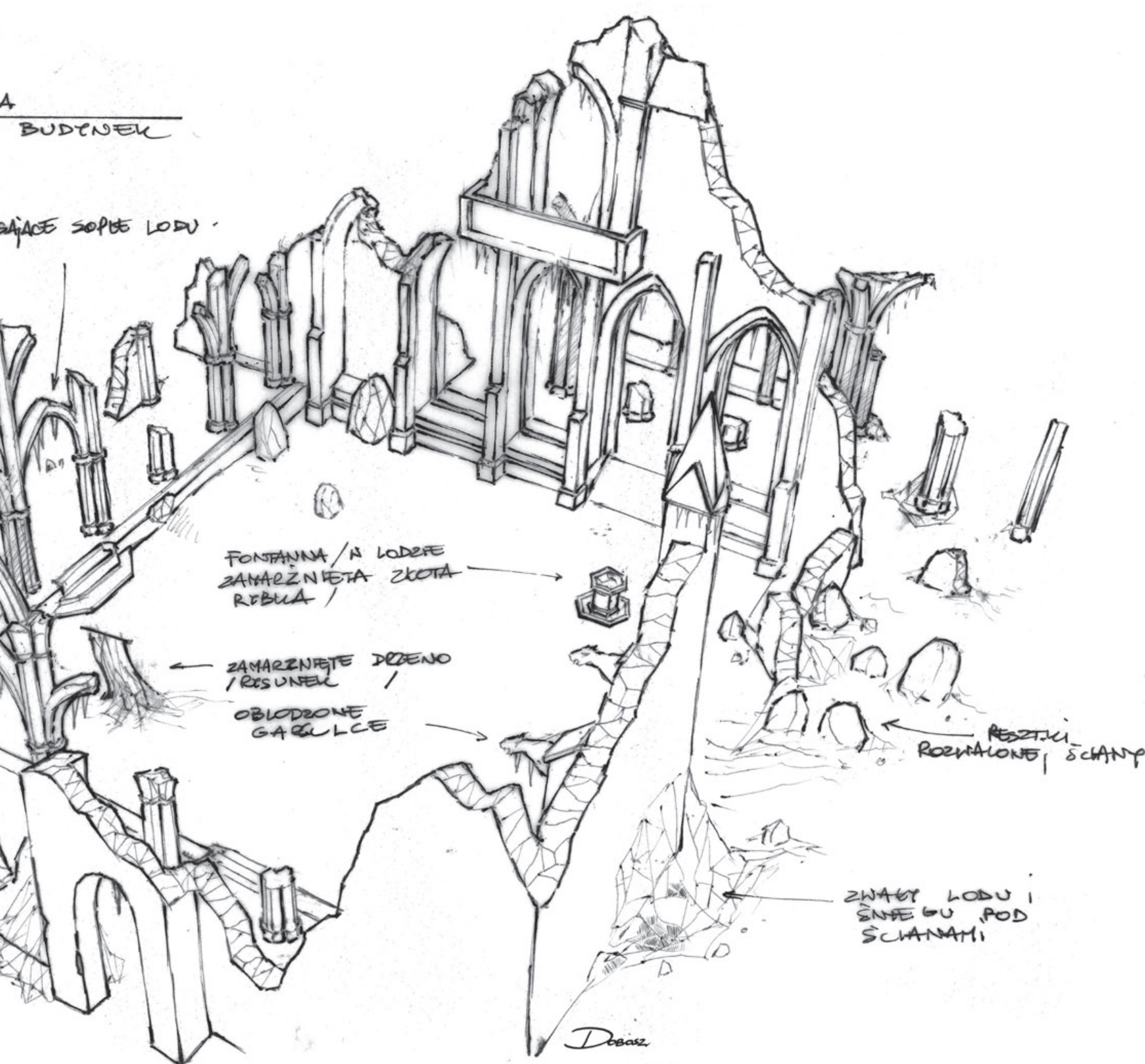


host of ifrits, and an unexpected guest who arrives to take away both adversaries – dead or alive.

Though Geralt is in this arena for a short time – as much as is required to settle things with his foes – the art team sought to make it as detailed as possible.

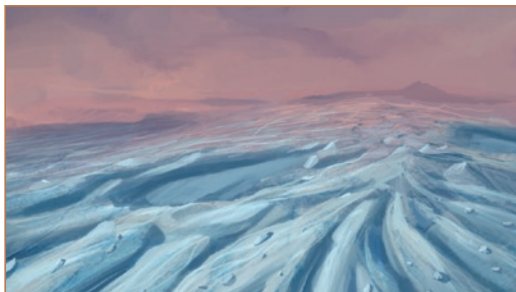
In addition to the ruins of the building itself, piles of rubble and courtyard fixtures protrude from the snow. As elements of the arena, the fountain and the lifeless tree trunk can be used during combat.

The tallest wall was designed to be a perch for the King of the Hunt. The spectral monarch observes Geralt's duel from there, then flows down to the combatants to bargain with the witcher for the soul of his enemy.



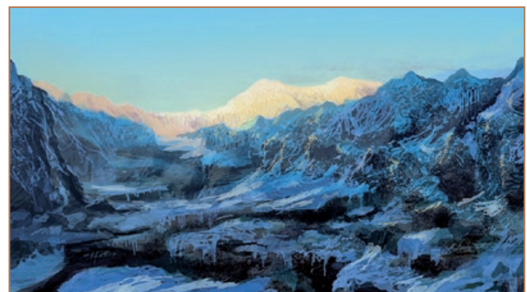


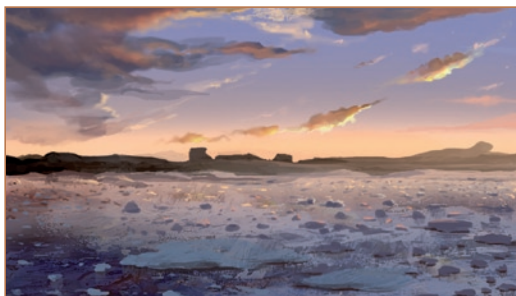


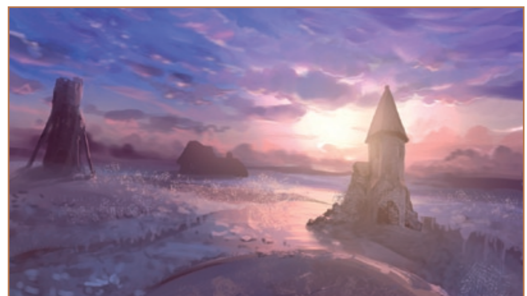


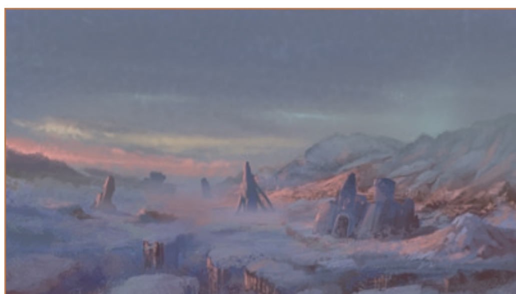












The illustrations on this page all depict the Ice Plains. The artist offered multiple visions in an effort to convey the mood of the location. These conceptual sketches were designed to inspire the location's creators. A quick comparison of the images reveals the myriad ways in which a seemingly monotone place like a sea of ice can be rendered.



EARLY SKETCHES

Later, they said he came from the North, passing through the Ropers' Gate. He came on foot, leading a heavily laden horse by the bridle. It was late afternoon, the ropers and saddlers had closed their stalls, the street was empty. Though it was hot, the man had a black coat thrown over his shoulders. He drew attention. (…)
The stranger's hair was almost white, but he was not old. Beneath his coat he wore a leather jerkin laced at the neck and shoulders. When he removed his coat, all saw the sword strapped across his back. This was nothing remarkable – in Vizima almost everyone went armed; but no one carried their sword behind them like a bow or quiver.
The stranger chose not to sit at a table among the few other guests; he stood at the bar, his gaze fixed on the innkeeper.

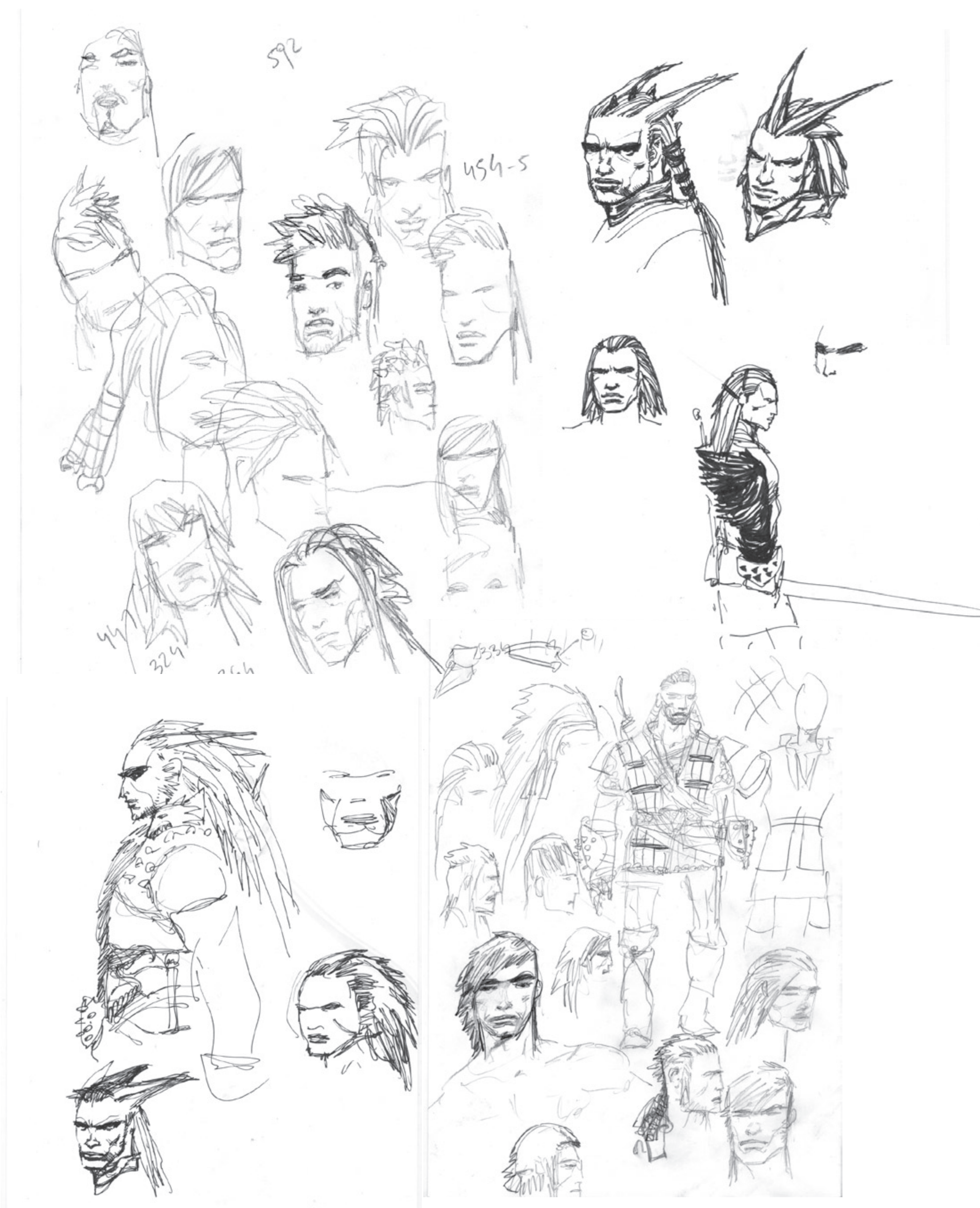
Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Witcher*

The game's protagonist, Geralt of Rivia, is a witcher, a traveling monster slayer. He exterminates beasts who threaten humanity – provided he is paid. A master of the sword, he also wields magical spells called Signs. As a youth, he underwent the Trial of the Grasses, effectively becoming a mutant – extraordinarily agile and fit, more vigorous than most humans. Geralt of Rivia is a formidable presence in Polish pop literature. Creating a game featuring him was quite a task.



The witcher has long, white hair. His face is scarred. His cat-like eyes glow in the dark when he consumes potions. Geralt makes some people feel uneasy, but women generally like him. One could say he's both threatening and interesting. His age is a mystery, his mutated organism matures slowly. In his novels and stories, Sapkowski offers a lot of information about the witcher's appearance. Still, every reader has his or her own vision of Geralt. The game's hero had to meet fan expectations – if not all, then a majority. But he had to do much more than that… In addition to expressing an idea, conceptual sketches were the basis for modeling the character and had to meet a series of technical requirements.







Someone floated this idea for Geralt: "The witcher needs to look like a secret agent, like a commando." We produced the initial character sketches based on this brief, half-joking description. It actually meant that Geralt was supposed to be ready for anything, equipped: high bootlegs, sword belts across his chest, potion slots on his shoulder strap, silver studded gloves, a trophy hook, a skinning knife, a satchel for alchemical ingredients, short weapon sheaths and, of course, a medallion around his neck. A lot… What's more, Geralt couldn't look overburdened, because witcher combat styles rely heavily on quickness and agility…



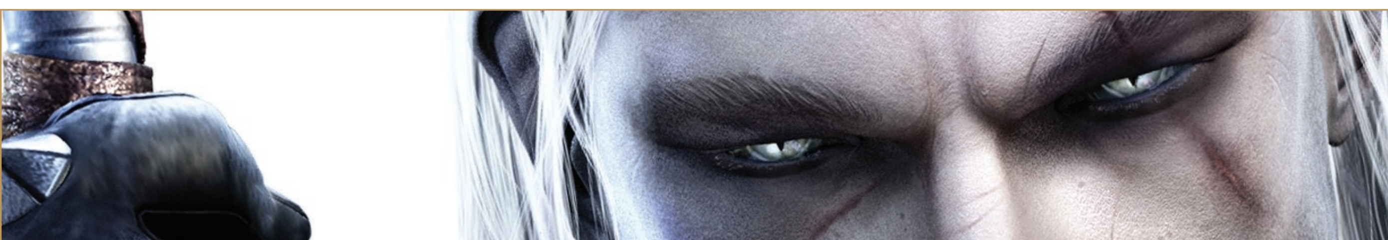



TRUST









THE WITCHER

Someone pounced and pinned him to the ground. Another tore the money pouch from his belt. The glimmer of a knife caught his eye. The one kneeling on his chest tore open his doublet at the neck, grabbed the chain and pulled out the medallion. He released it immediately.
"Baal-Zebuth," he heard a gasp. "A witcher… A pro..."
The other panted and cursed.
"He had no sword… The gods… Ack! Ptooie! Hex it all, the Evil… Flee, Radgast! Don't touch him! Ptooie!"

Andrzej Sapkowski, *A Splinter of Ice*



Geralt evolved as work continued on *The Witcher*. We made many minor adjustments over time and ultimately arrived at the appearance depicted above: solidly built, not overly heavy, a handsome man with a face marked by ugly scars, a killer who sometimes philosophizes and sometimes murders without uttering a word. A true pro…



On the previous page, Geralt has neither weapons nor armor. At the opening of the game, this is how the witchers find him, passed out on the road leading to Kaer Morhen. Above, we see Geralt back on the path, ready to combat monsters. On the left he appears in the leather armor he receives from Vesemir, which includes sword belts and a satchel for alchemical ingredients. In the course of play, Geralt can order a special suit of armor – additionally strengthened but light – in which to face his archrival. This is seen on the right.



We created numerous options for Geralt's armor. The hero can only acquire it by completing a long and arduous quest. Soon after, he faces his chief adversary. We wanted the witcher to look threatening, warlike. We ultimately abandoned the studs on the sleeves and torso, because they made the armor look too heavy, conflicting with the vision of a quick and agile fighter. The stages preceding the final armor design can be seen above.







SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

"If the Scoia'tael attack, your Geralt plans to stand by and gaze as they slit our throats. Actually, you'll probably find yourself standing alongside him, taking in an object lesson on the behavior of a witcher when faced with sentient races in conflict."

"I'm not sure I understand."

"And I'm not surprised."

"Is that why you argued with him and got so angry? Who are these Scoia'tael anyway? These... Squirrels?"

"Ciri," Yarpen brusquely tousled his beard. "These are not matters for immature little girls."

"Oh, now you're angry with me. I'm not little, you know. I heard what the soldiers at the guardhouse said about the Scoia'tael. I saw… I saw two dead elves. And the knight said that they… kill, too. And that they are not only elves. There are dwarves among them, too."

"I know," Yarpen replied dryly.

"And you're a dwarf…"

"No question about that."

"So why are you afraid of the Squirrels? They only attack humans."

"It's not that simple," he said gloomily. "Unfortunately."

Ciri remained silent, biting her lip and crinkling her nose.

"I know," she said suddenly. "The Scoia'tael are fighting for freedom. And you, a dwarf, are a special secret servant of King Henselt, and on a human leash."

Yarpen snorted, wiped his nose in his sleeve and leaned out of the coach seat (…).

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Blood of the Elves*



Elves in *The Witcher* are as Sapkowski portrayed them: an old, sophisticated race with a rich culture, a race whose star is waning. They remain proud and feel only contempt for humans – “hairy apes” who arrived in this world ages ago, engaged nonhumans in a long war, forcing them to take to the mountains.



Coarse and forthright, dwarves always speak their mind. They can be crude and swear like sailors, but they value friendship highly. Most representatives of the race live in the enclave of Mahakam, busying themselves with mining and metallurgy along with their gnome cousins. Some dwarves elected to live among humans and now face the same repressions as elves.



Two representatives of the fair sex: a young townswoman or peasant girl on the left, a streetwalker on the right. Geralt meets women of varying status, age and temperament. Some, drawn to his otherness, flirt with him. Others see him as an outcast, fear him, and thumb their nose at him.



A rich merchant in luxurious garb – his dyed garments, fur-lined vest coat, proud stance, and swelling face complete with double-chin betray him as someone important. A golden bell hangs around his neck: priding himself on his affluence, this man seeks to draw attention.



We took a long time designing Triss Merigold, one of the game's main characters. We began with a photo session involving the model who lent Triss her face and figure. Two versions of the sorceress were needed: an elegant one in a gown, and a "combat" version in informal attire. As a sorceress and thus a liberated woman, Triss wears relatively provocative clothing, revealing more than townswomen and peasant women.







This series of illustrations depicts the development of the head of Azar Javed, one of the witcher's chief foes. Azar is a native of Zerrikania (or another equally distant land), which meant he could be different from all characters, even exotic. We started with his sinister gaze, baldness, and beard. At later stages, Azar gained complex piercings, leather strap accessories, and tattoos.



Azar Javed in all his splendor: trousers, boots, and accessories galore around his neck as is the custom in his native land. Azar's model is one of the most original in the game. We can safely say that in him Geralt has a worthy opponent.







EROTICA

Bolides collided and a cataclysm ensued.

They fell on a pile of folios, dispersing them in all directions with their weight. Geralt sank his nose into Fringilla's cleavage, embraced her strongly and gripped her knee. Several books prevented him from lifting her dress, among them the initialed and illuminated Lives of the Prophets as well as De haemorrhoidibus, an interesting though controversial medical treatise. The witcher pushed the volumes aside and impatiently jerked at her frock. Fringilla lifted her hips eagerly. (…)

Sensing it was time, Fringilla enthusiastically, energetically spread her legs, toppling a column of books and fascicles that dropped on them in an avalanche. An edition of Land Registry Law bound in embossed leather leaned against her buttock, while the brass-fitted Codex diplomaticus touched Geralt's wrist. Geralt evaluated the situation in a blink and took advantage, placing the volume where it would be useful. Fringilla squealed for the fittings were cold, but they warmed in an instant.

She sighed aloud, released the witcher's hair, threw her arms to the side and gripped books in both hands – Descriptive Geometry in her left, an Outline of Reptiles and Amphibians in her right. Clutching her hips, Geralt unwittingly kicked over another column of books, yet he was too busy to concern himself with the fascicles that dropped on him. Fringilla, groaning convulsively, swept her head across the pages of Comments about Death…

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Lady of the Lake*

They say a picture speaks a thousand words. Erotica is a sensitive issue, and choosing the right illustrations was crucial. The succeeding pages depict Geralt's conquests. No descriptions – we'd rather use words where they can be useful.































































FLASHBACKS

Renfri entered the market.

She approached slowly, treading softly as a cat, passing the carts and stalls. The crowd in the streets and by buildings, buzzing like a swarm of hornets, now grew silent. Geralt stood still, his sword in his lowered hand. The girl came within ten paces and stopped. He could see that beneath her vest she wore a short coat of mail that barely covered her hips.

"You have made your choice," she stated. "Are you sure it's the right one?"

"This will not be another Tridam," Geralt said with effort.

"It might not have been. Stregobor scoffed at me. He said that I can slaughter everyone in Blaviken and the surrounding villages, yet he won't leave his tower. And he'll let no one in, including you. What are you looking at? Yes, I lied to you. I have lied all my life whenever it was necessary. Why should I make an exception for you?"

"Walk away, Renfri."

She laughed.

"No, Geralt." She quickly and smoothly drew her sword.

"Renfri."

"No, Geralt. You made your choice. Now it's my turn."

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Lesser Evil*

The consequences of Geralt's decisions are only revealed after a time. If the hero supports the elves in their struggle against the Order, an elven unit will later appear to help him combat a group of Salamandra bandits. Flashbacks, illustrations of Geralt's choices and their consequences, remind players of past decisions and the ensuing events.



















































Placeables

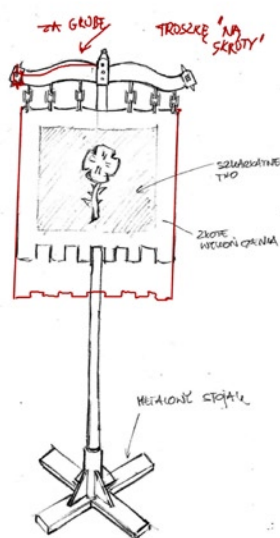
The labotratory differed little from the one Ciri knew from the Temple of Melitele in Ellander. It was brightly lit, clean, with long, metal-lined tabletops covered with glass vessels and objects – full jars, flasks, bulbs, test tubes, pipes, lenses, hissing and bubbling alembics, and other strange devices. Like at Ellander, the air was filled with the strong odors of ether, spirit, formalin, and some other substance that caused her to feel fear. Even there, at the temple that provided comfort, with affable priestesses and her friend Yennefer, Ciri felt fear in the laboratory. Yet at Ellander, no one dragged her to the laboratory by force, no one brutally sat her on a bench, no one gripped her shoulders and arms with hands like iron. There, at Ellander, at the center of the laboratory there was no horrible, steel chair, the shape of which so sadistically, obviously betrayed its purpose.

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Lady of the Lak*

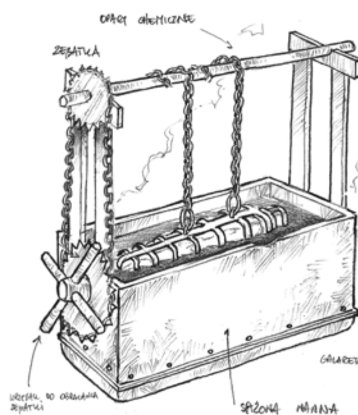
Placeables are scenery elements that unlike items cannot be lifted and taken. They include the winch that lifts the bars of the gate in the Prologue, the gate itself, objects like beds or barrels occupying the corner of a tavern.

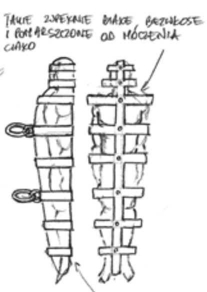










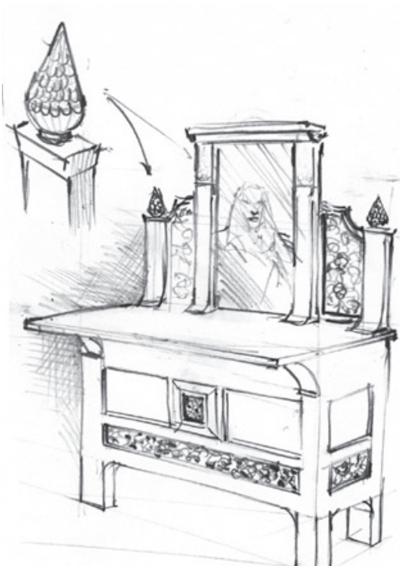








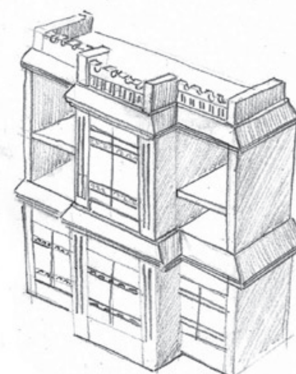
Examples of game objects: an alembic from a laboratory, a banner of the Order of the Flaming Rose, a beehive shaped like a santon, and furniture belonging to Triss Merigold – a dressing table, cupboard, and canopy bed.

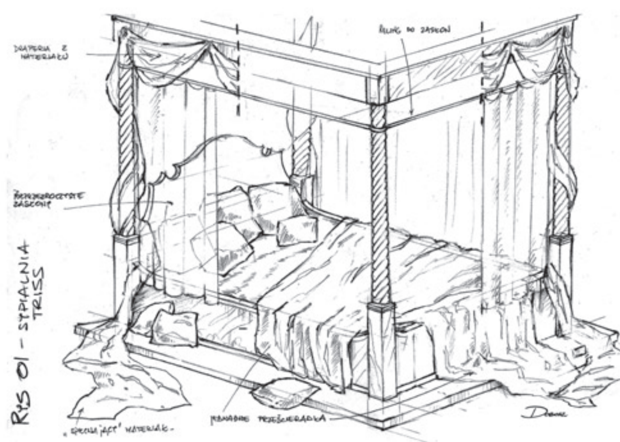














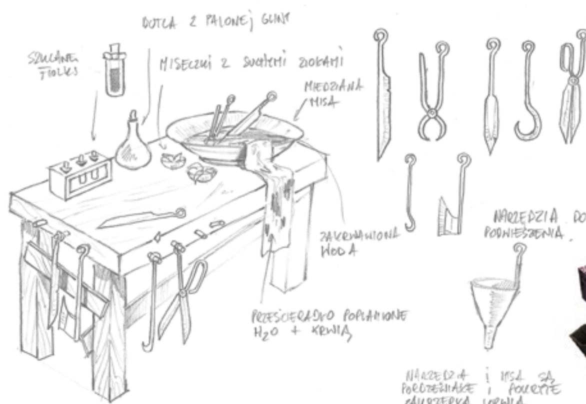
DOM TRISS – TAJNE LABORATORIUM – MAGICZNE LUSTRO


SZKŁO JEST POPĘKANE



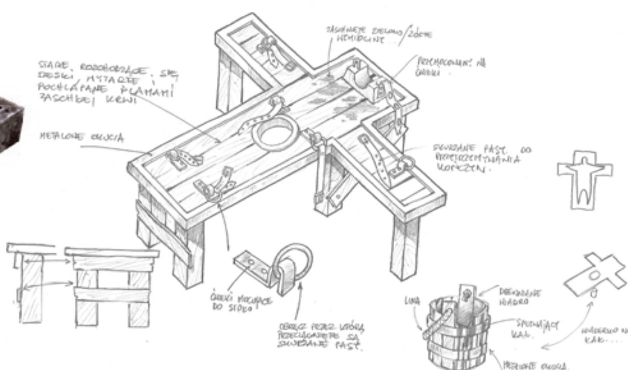

WIRAIONA CZĘŚĆ




08_ SURGTABLE 03

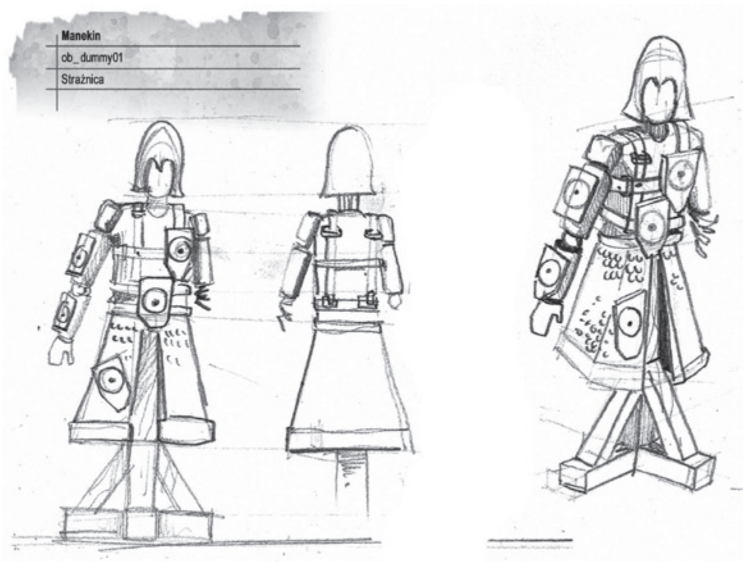


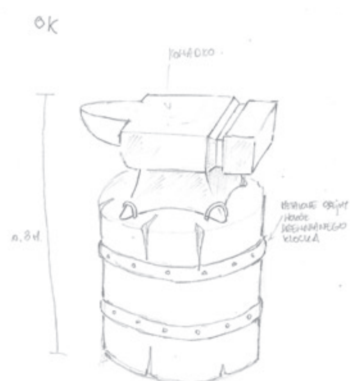



05_ SURGTABLE 02



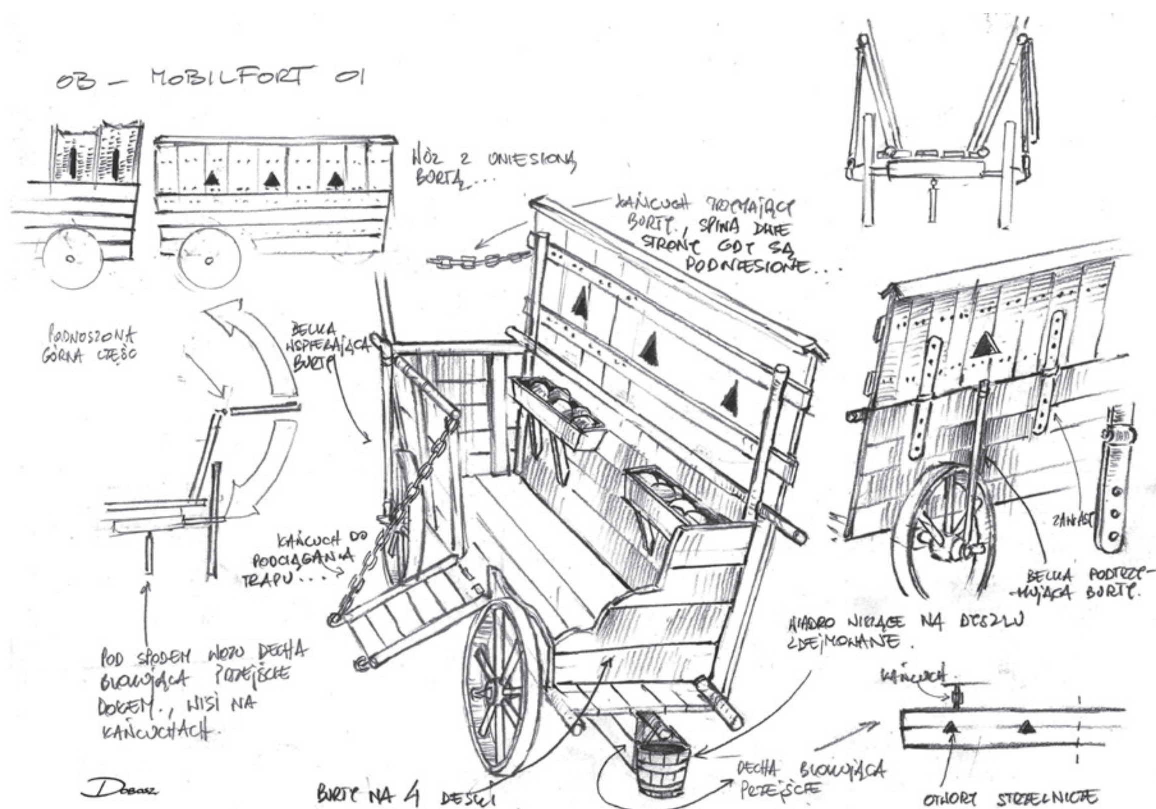




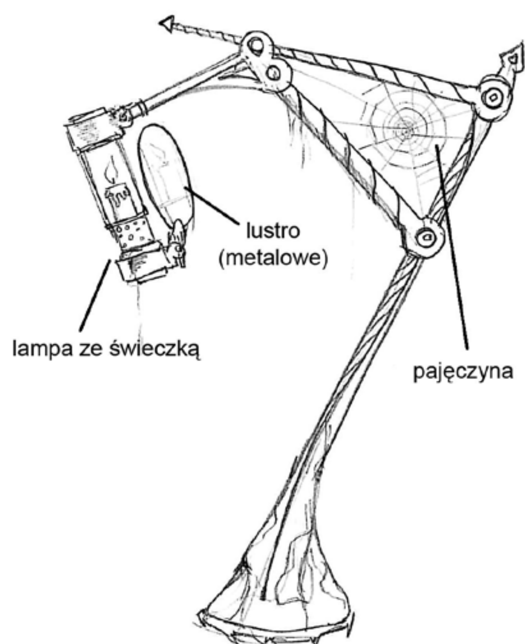




Another set of placeables: a sorcerer's magic mirror, surgical tables from the witchers' laboratory, a market stall, a training form, and an anvil.


OB – MOBILFORT 01
PODNOSZONA GÓRNA CZĘŚĆ
BELKA WSPIERAJĄCA BURTY
KAŃCUCH DO PODCIĄGANIA TRAPU...
BURTY NA 4 DESKI
DECHA BLOKUJĄCA PRZEJŚCIE
ZAWIAS
OTWORY STRZELNICZE

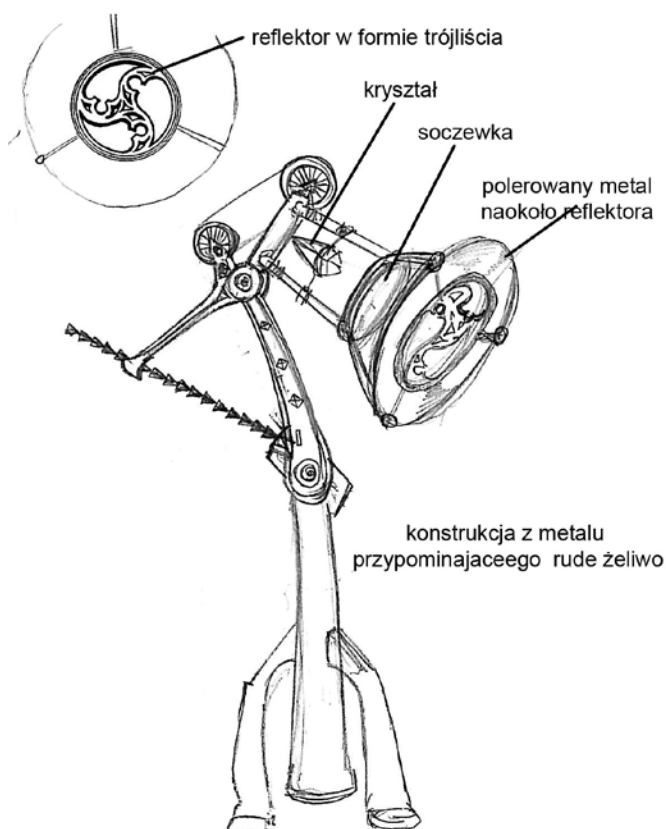




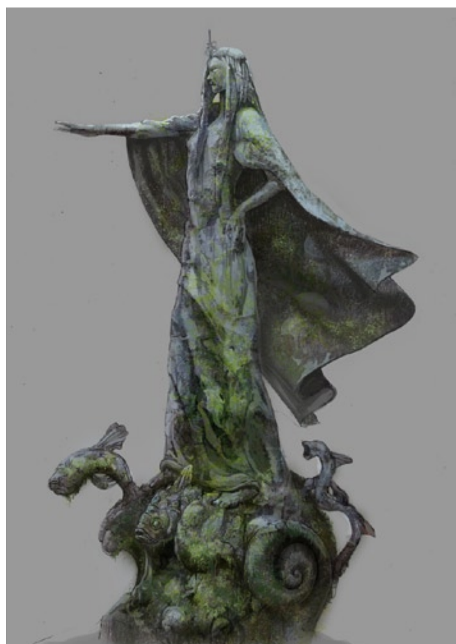


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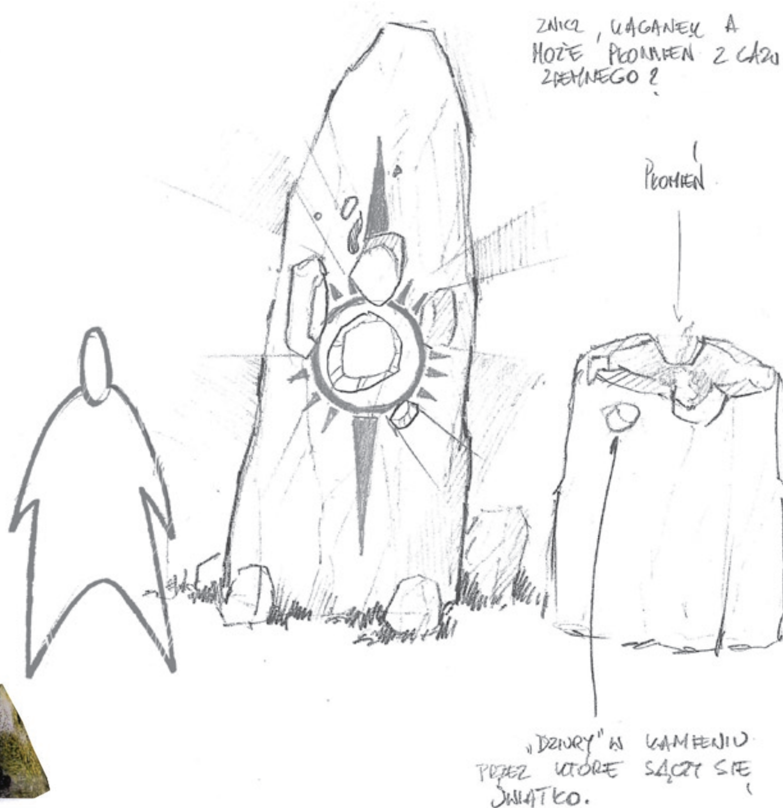
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ZNICZ, KAGANEK A MOŻE PŁOMIEŃ Z GAZU ZIEMNEGO?
PŁOMIEŃ
„DZIURY" W KAMIENIU PRZEZ KTÓRE SĄCZY SIĘ ŚWIATŁO.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

The sword measured some forty inches but weighed no more than thirty-five ounces. The blade, branded with runes over much of its length, was bluish and sharp as a razor. With a bit of practice, one could use it to shave. The twelve-inch hilt, wrapped in woven, lizard skin strips, had a cylindrical brass sheath instead of a pommel, while the cross-guard was small and elaborate.

"Nice," Geralt said, sending the sihill into a quick, hissing whirl, feigning a fast cut from the left before instantly setting a high, right-hand second parry. "Indeed, a nice piece of iron."

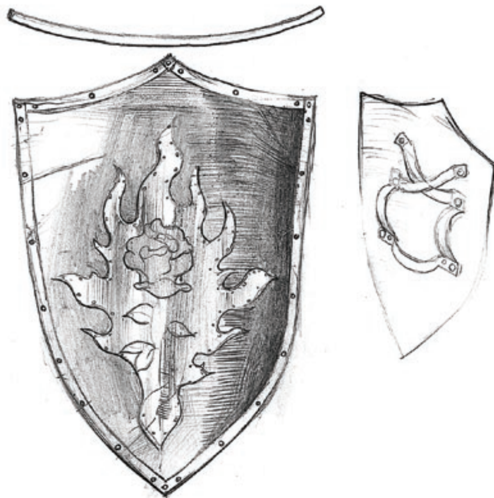
"Ha!" snorted Percival Schuttenbach."Iron?! Examine it more closely before you call it a gnarled radish."

"I had a better sword once."

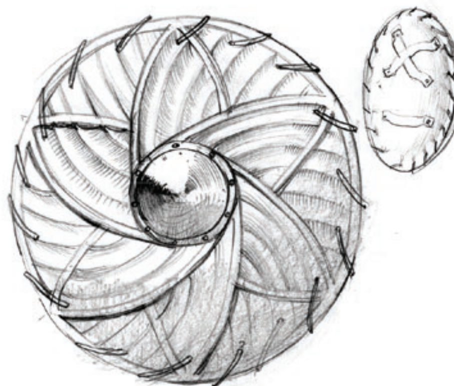
Andrzej Sapkowski, *Baptism by Fire*



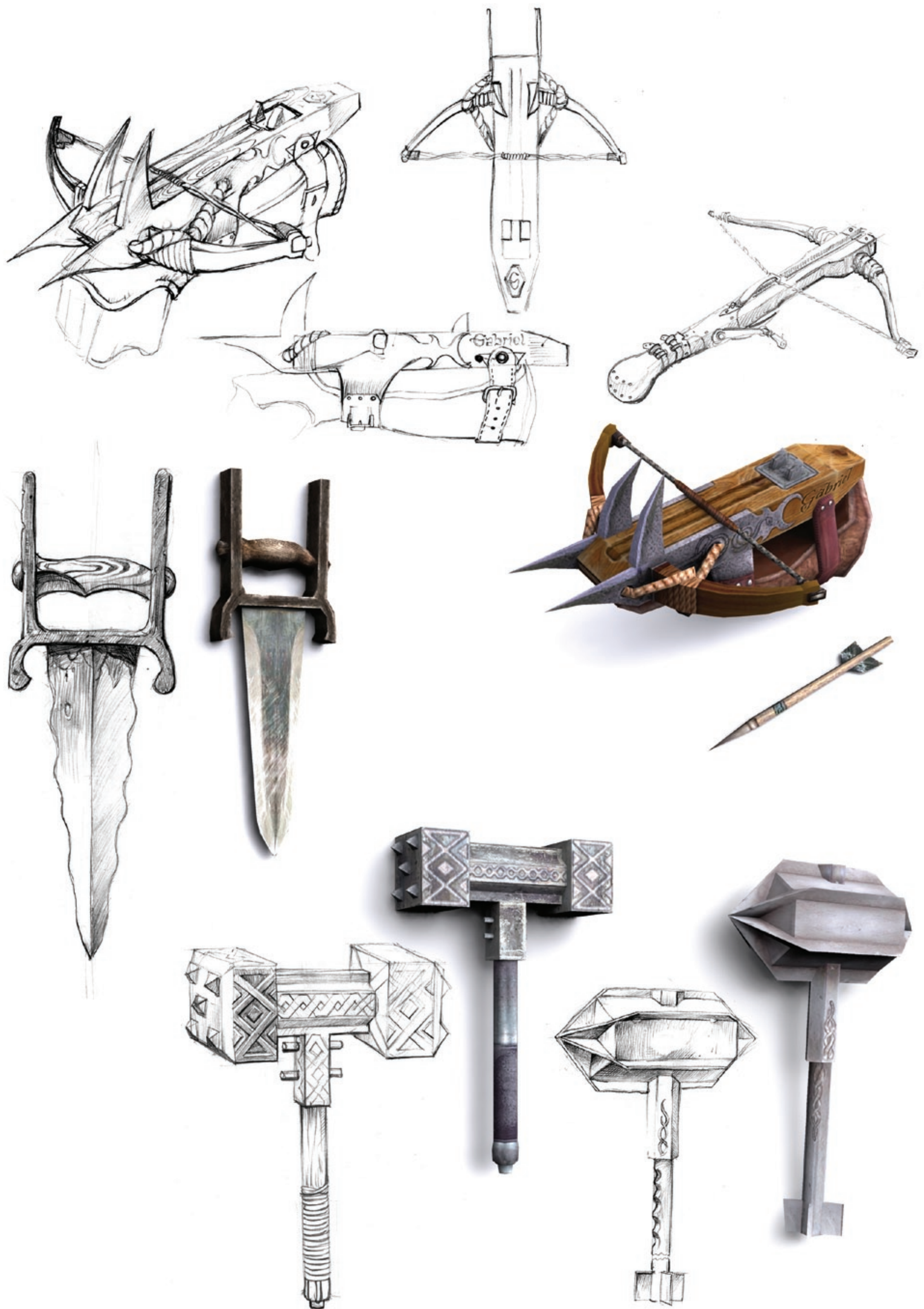











Gabriel
Gabriel





SYMBOLS

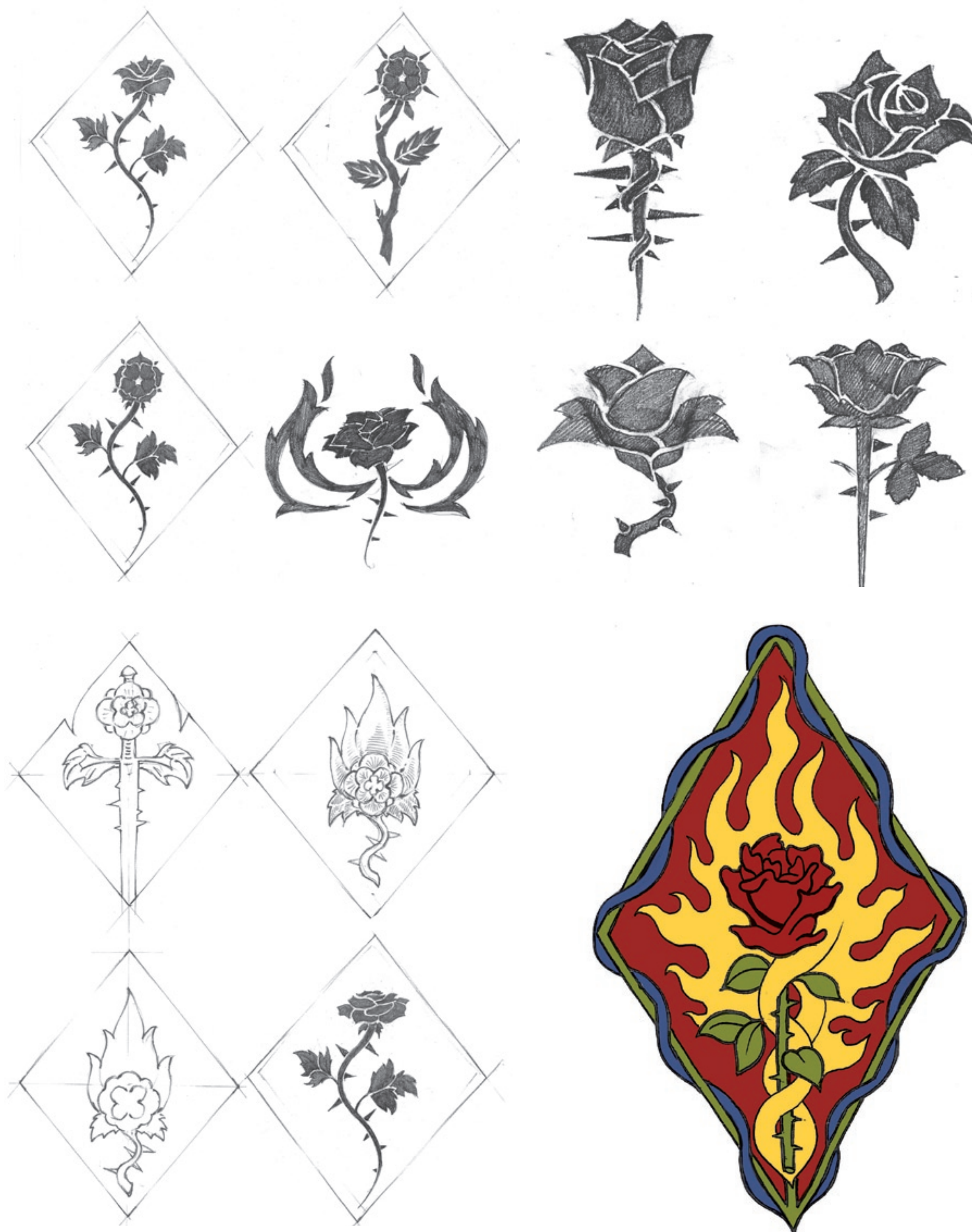
"I, Donymir of Troa," cried the thin knight bearing three lions on his jerkin, "was at both battles of Sodden, but I saw nothing of you there, master dwarf!"

"You stood guard by the wagon trains, surely!" Sheldon Skaggs retorted. "While I was in the first line, where it was hot!"

"Mind your words, bearded one!" Donymir of Troa turned red as he pulled up his sword-laden belt. "And who you utter them to!"

"Mind your words yourself!" said the dwarf, slapping the axe at his belt and turning to offer his companions a toothy grin. "Did you see that? Plowing knight! Crested! Three lions on his shield! Two of them shitting while the third growls!"

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Blood of the Elves*



The emblem of the Order of the Flaming Rose, adorning the nights' attire and banners, developed over time. These illustrations depict its evolution.

We considered many forms for the rose, from a flower creeping upward, through a closed calyx, to a blossom surrounded by flaming leaves. We settled on a "heraldic" concept, and though the rose differs from those seen in real coats of arms, the emblem does resemble a crest.



An allegory of alchemical transformation: the four elements personified complete the circle of birth and death. This transmutation also accurately represents the witchers' mutations. Below, symbols of the witchers' Signs.

FIRE - IGNI

WATER - AKSJI

EARTH - QUEN

POWIETRZE - AARD

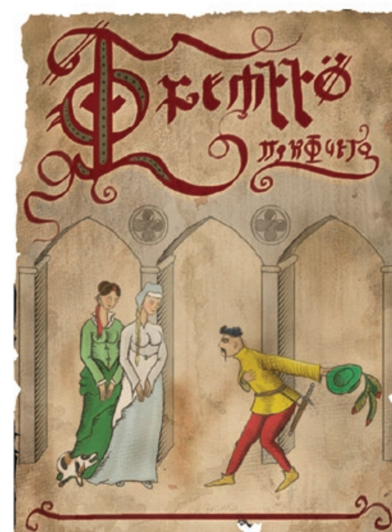
MAGIA - YRDEN











The alphabet in the game is modeled after Glagolitic script and is another Slavic accent in *The Witcher*. Inscriptions in this alphabet can be found on placards and notices posted around Vizima.



PLATIGE IMAGE

Geralt suddenly stopped, froze with his sword raised. Puzzled, the striga stopped as well. The witcher slowly traced a half circle with the sword. He stepped forward, then again, then leapt, twirling the blade above his head.

The striga crouched while retreating in a zigzag. Geralt was close again, the sword flashing in his hand. The witcher's eyes lit up in a menacing gaze; a hoarse growl surged from between his clenched teeth. The striga retreated once more, repelled by the intense hatred and violence that flowed from the attacking man in waves that penetrated her brain and bowels. Frightened and pained by this unknown emotion, she shuddered, shrieked, turned, and bolted off madly into the manor's dark maze of passages.

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Witcher*

The film introducing the game presents its main character and is very much a showpiece. The screenplay for this Platige Image production was based on Andrzej Sapkowski's short story *The Witcher*, the first story to be published about the white-haired monster slayer. The studio, famous for its Oscar-nominated short titled *The Cathedral*, also produced the film that concludes the game. The two cinematic resolution productions last approximately ten minutes and consist of over three hundred shots. Their production took more than one and half years.

Portions of the storyboard for the film introducing the game: while fighting the striga, the witcher casts the Aard Sign.


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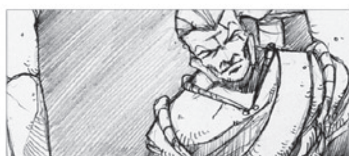

F_092_a


F_092_b


F_093


F_094


F_095


F_096_a


F_096_b


G_105_a


G_105_b


G_106


G_107


G_108


G_109


G_110


G_111

At the instant when the striga curled up and sprang, the chain whistled and snaked through the air, instantly coiling itself around the monster's shoulders, neck, and head. The striga dropped to the ground mid leap and emitted an ear-piercing shriek. She tumbled about, howling terribly with rage or from the stinging pain of the hated metal. (…) Geralt stepped backward and, never taking his eyes off the shape thrashing on the floor, breathed deeply, focused.

The chain snapped, its silver links scattered everywhere like rain, ringing on the stone. Blinded by fury, the striga roared and hurled herself at Geralt. He waited calmly, raised his right hand and cast the Aard Sign…

Andrzej Sapkowski, *The Witcher*


G_097



G_098


G_099



G_100



G_101


G_102


G_103


G_104

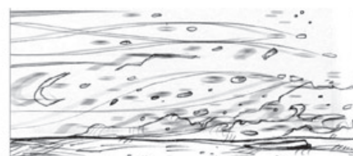

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G_112_b


G_113


G_114


G_115

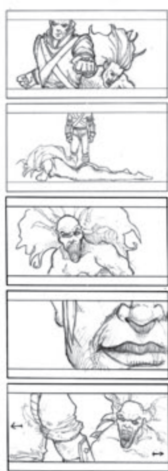

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G_117

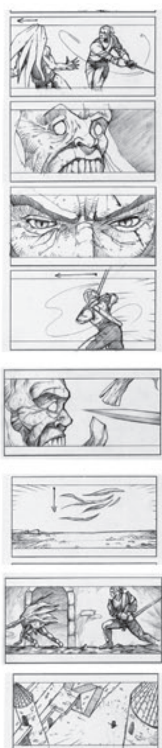
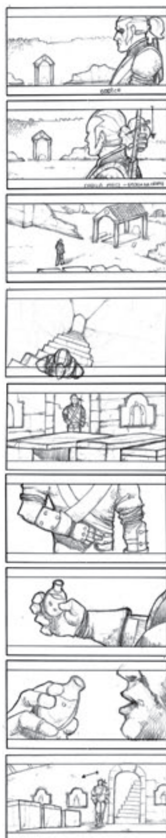

G_118



This storyboard was the basis for the film introducing the game.

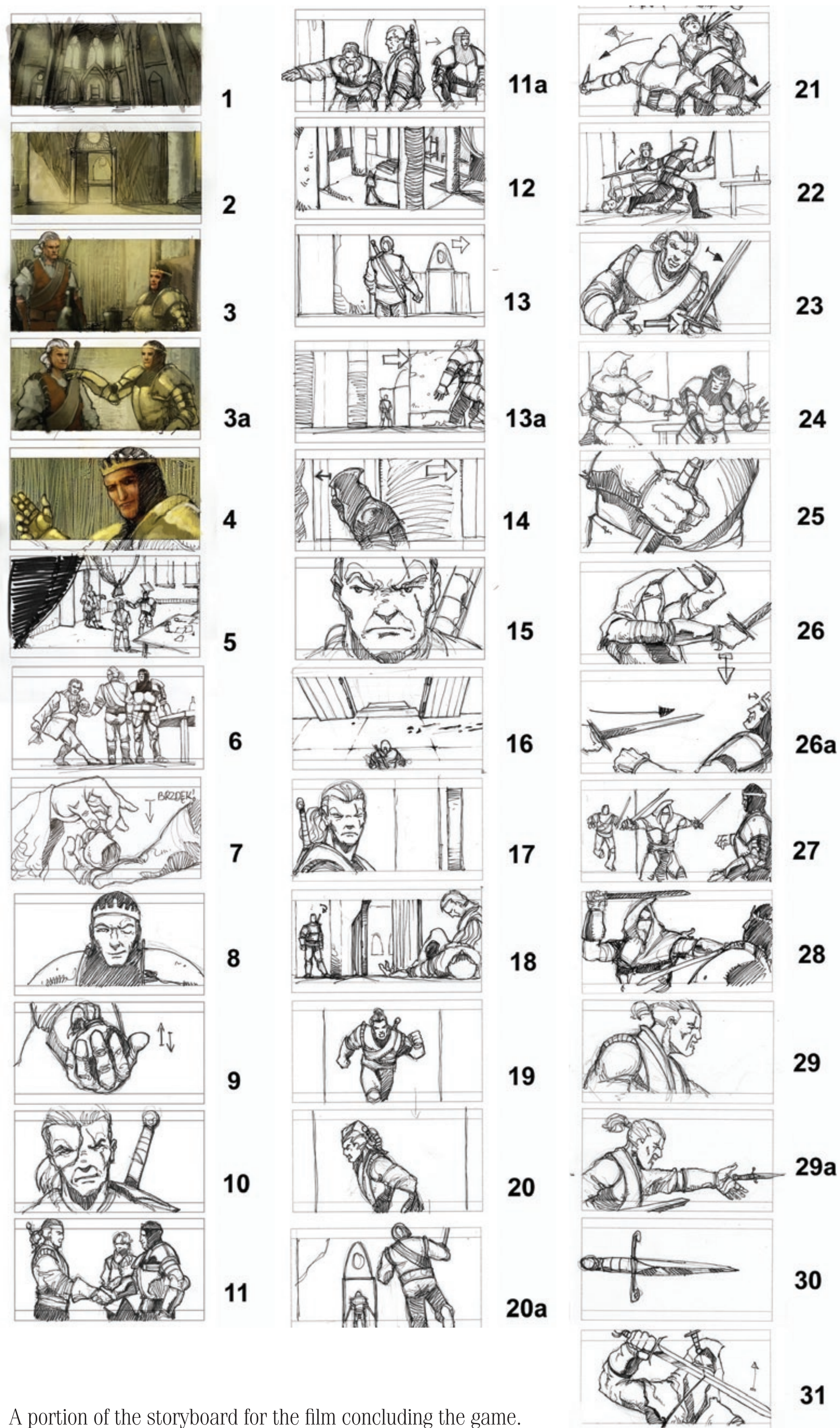











A portion of the storyboard for the film concluding the game.

















The illustrations depict the stages involved in creating the model of Geralt used in the two films. The figure gained complexity with each stage.







Seeking the ideal Geralt: minor changes in facial features can mean the difference between a character viewers do or do not like. The images illustrate how the protagonist changed over a span of just two days. The “Wednesday” version of Geralt’s face was ultimately approved as the final version to be used in the film.



















The sketches on these pages present the striga and her human form as conceived by various artists: Przemysław “Trust” Truściński, Rafał Wojtunik, and Krzysztof Fornalczyk.









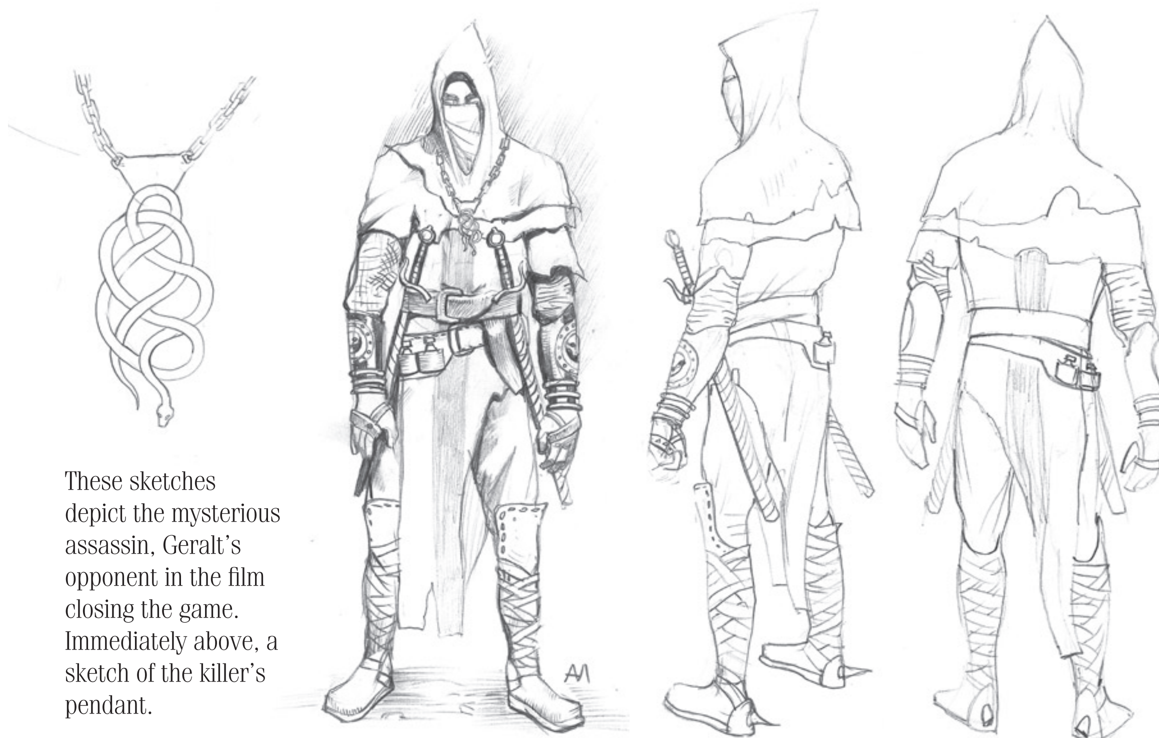
Princess Adda, not yet completely released from the curse, scratches Geralt with her claws.











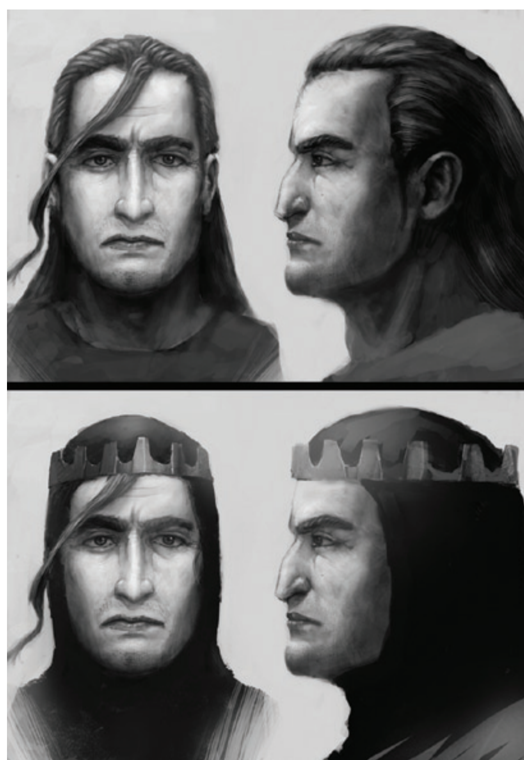
These sketches depict the mysterious assassin, Geralt's opponent in the film closing the game. Immediately above, a sketch of the killer's pendant.



A rendered image of the unknown killer, who uses two swords and seems no less agile than the witcher.

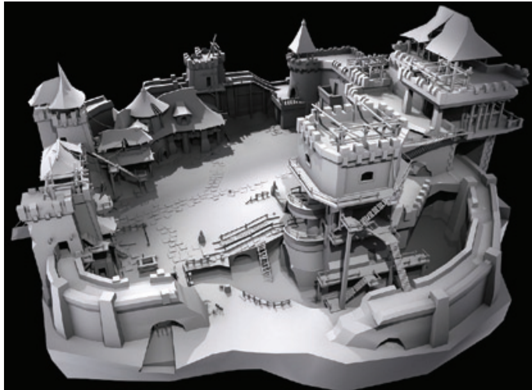


King Foltest of Temeria. The illustrations depict a series of concepts and the final, rendered model.





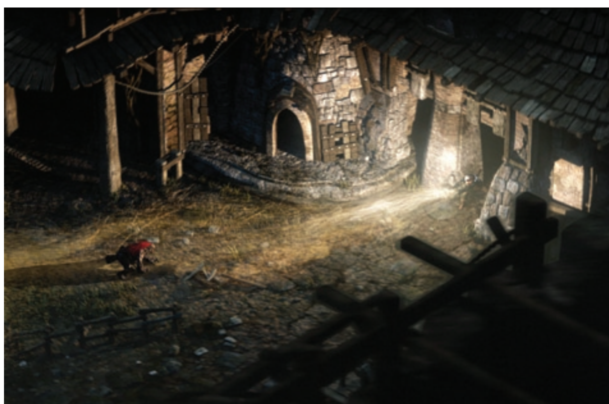
A guard at King Foltest's palace.





This model of the Old Manor was created for use in the film. The former seat of Temerian kings, the building was deserted and became the striga's lair. This gloomy complex was rendered in great detail. Viewers see it from many perspectives, while the protagonist moves all around, running about the courtyard and scaling the walls.





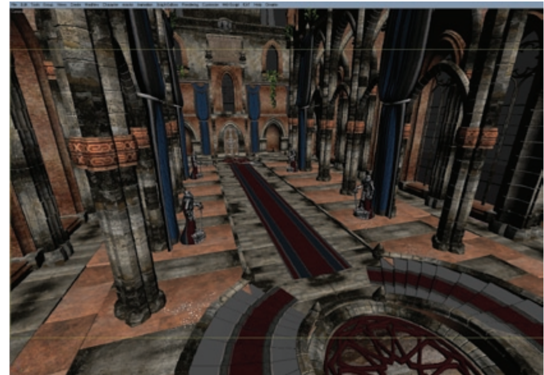




The Old Manor, the arena for Geralt's struggle with the striga, is not a stereotypical Medieval castle. The old, partly destroyed building incorporates elements of multiple architectural styles and more closely resembles an early Slavic fortress.





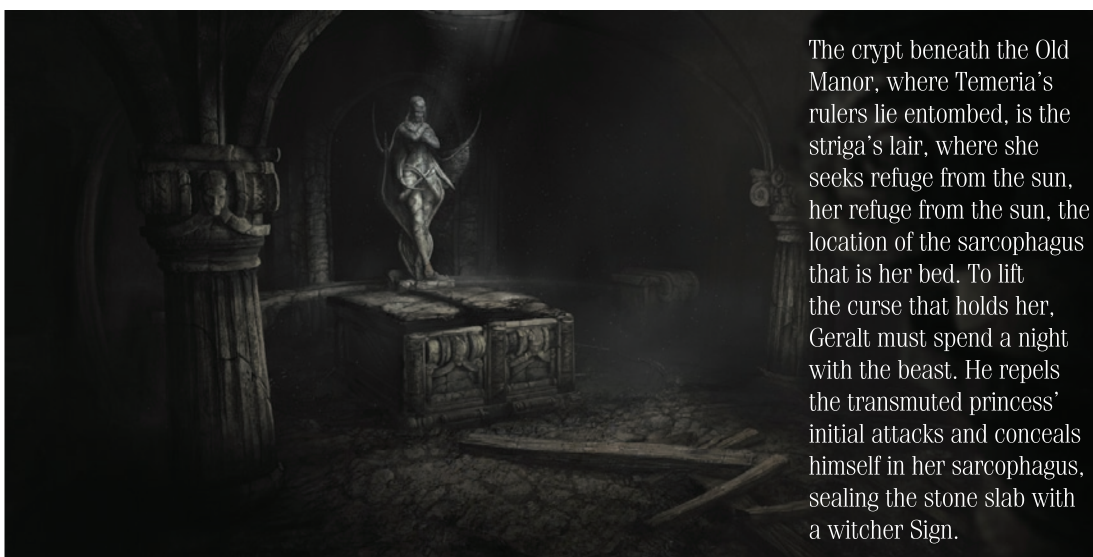


The film concluding the game is set in the throne room of King Foltest's palace. The chamber overwhelms and intimidates, and was inspired by the palace interior as presented in the game.

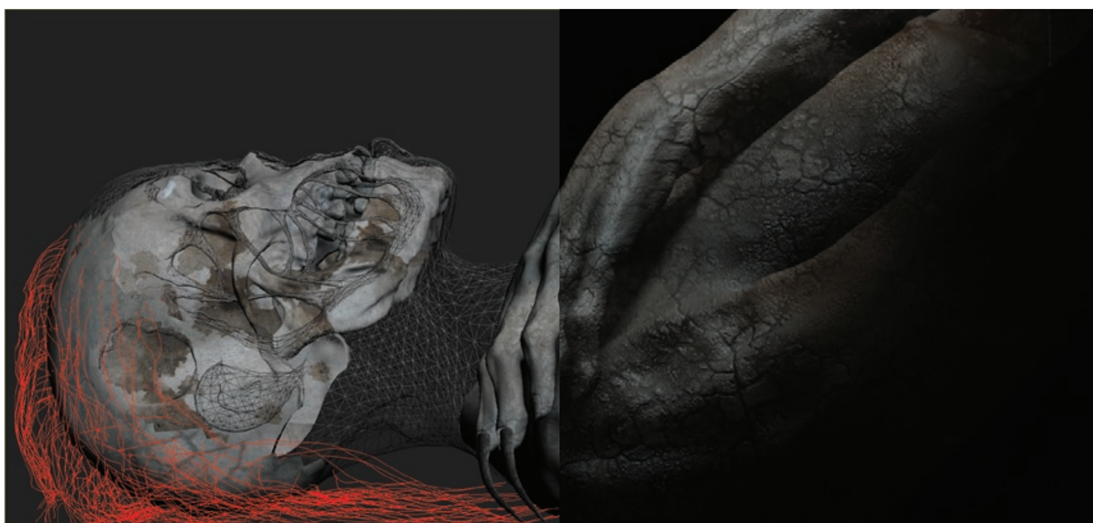








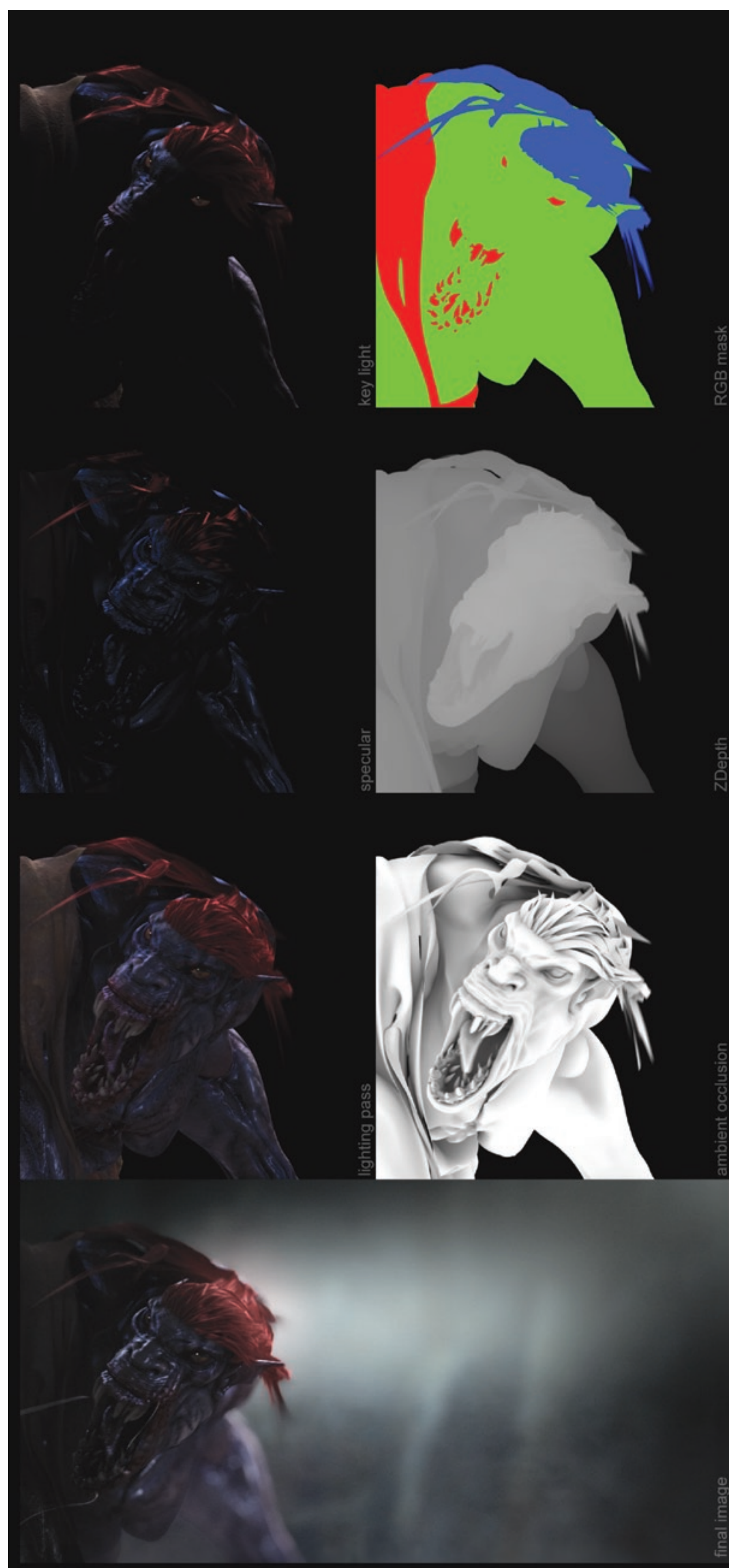
The crypt beneath the Old Manor, where Temeria's rulers lie entombed, is the striga's lair, where she seeks refuge from the sun, her refuge from the sun, the location of the sarcophagus that is her bed. To lift the curse that holds her, Geralt must spend a night with the beast. He repels the transmuted princess' initial attacks and conceals himself in her sarcophagus, sealing the stone slab with a witcher Sign.



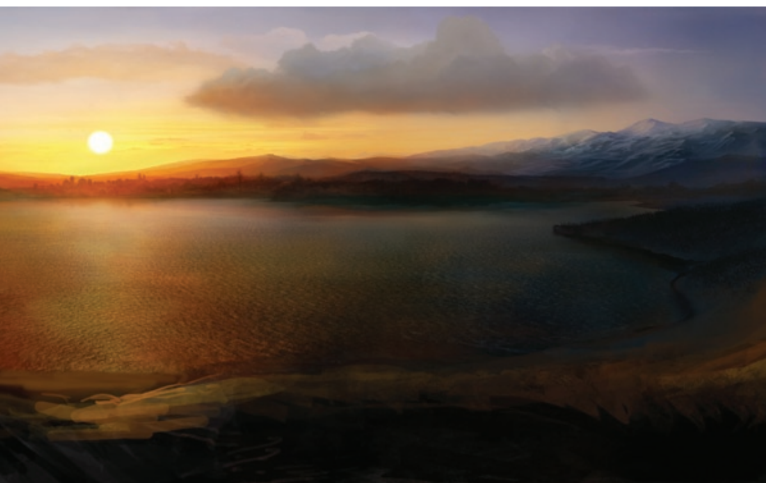


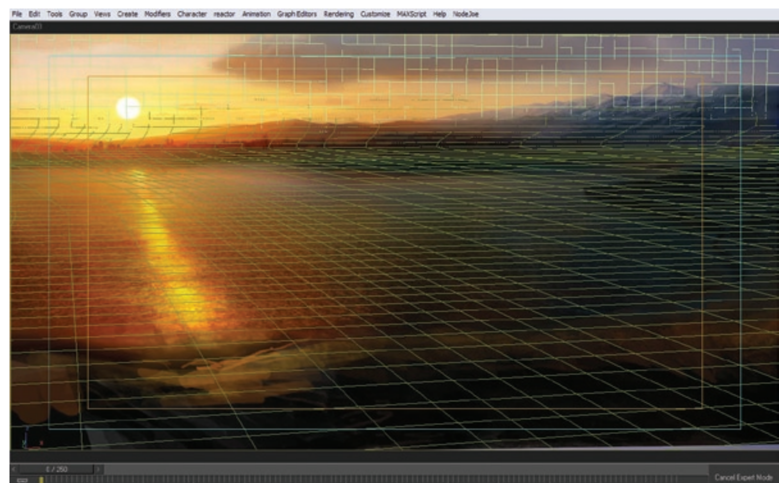


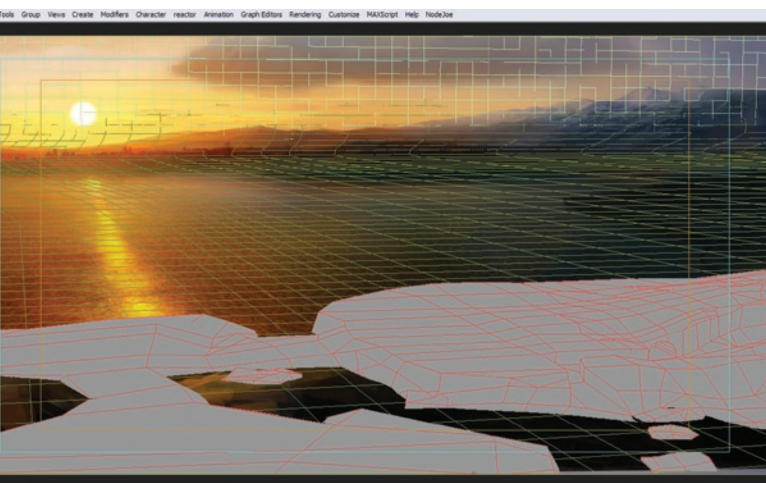
Individual compositing layers can be seen in the frames. The layers are assembled to produce the final effect: the face of Princess Adda, once again human, and the face of the witcher.

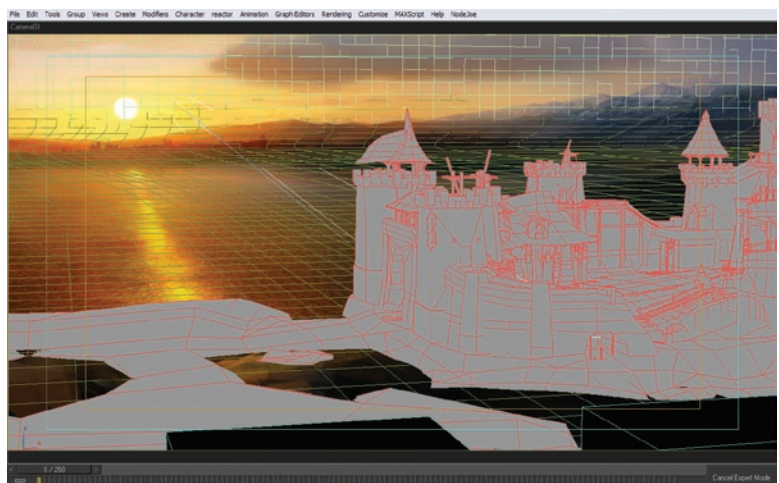


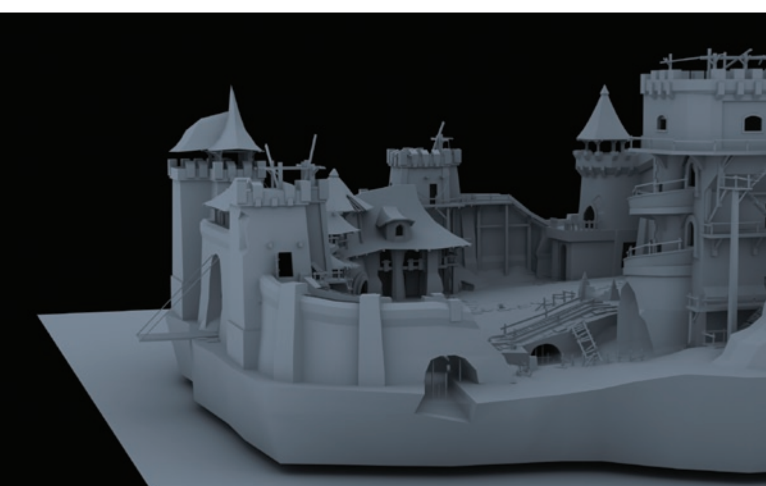
Anatomical detail, lighting, and other layers are applied to the model to produce the striga in its final form.













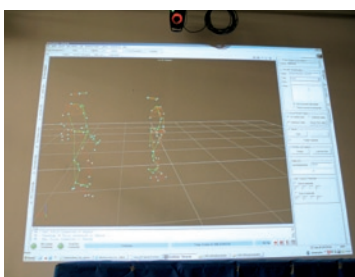
To loosely quote Sapkowski: You only get one chance to make a first impression. Creating the first shot in the intro film was an arduous process involving multiple stages.

In these images we see the mo-cap set used to produce the film closing the game. Motion capture technology helped us create the fight sequence involving Geralt and the mysterious assassin. The technology allows us to transfer an actor's realistic movement to the three-dimensional model of a figure. The actors, dressed in special costumes with markers, move about within a defined space, remaining within sight of all the cameras set up to record movement. Using infra-red signals, the cameras 'read' the movement of the markers in space and then transfer their position and rotation to the three-dimensional, computerized structural model.
In the photo below – Paweł Pliszka, who plays Geralt in the fight sequence. Maciek Kwiatkowski, who plays the assassin, can be seen on the right.







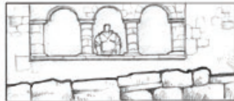




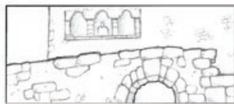


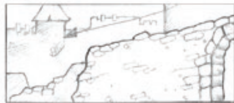
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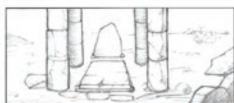
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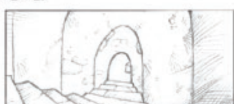
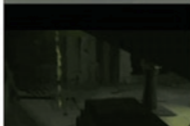
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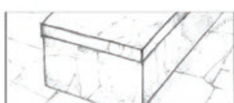
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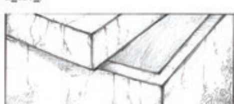
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B_027_h

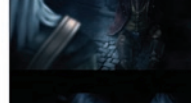
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B_028

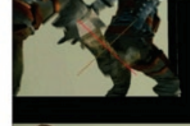
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B_031

B_032

B_033

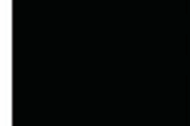
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C_035

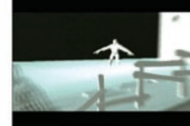
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C_037

C_038

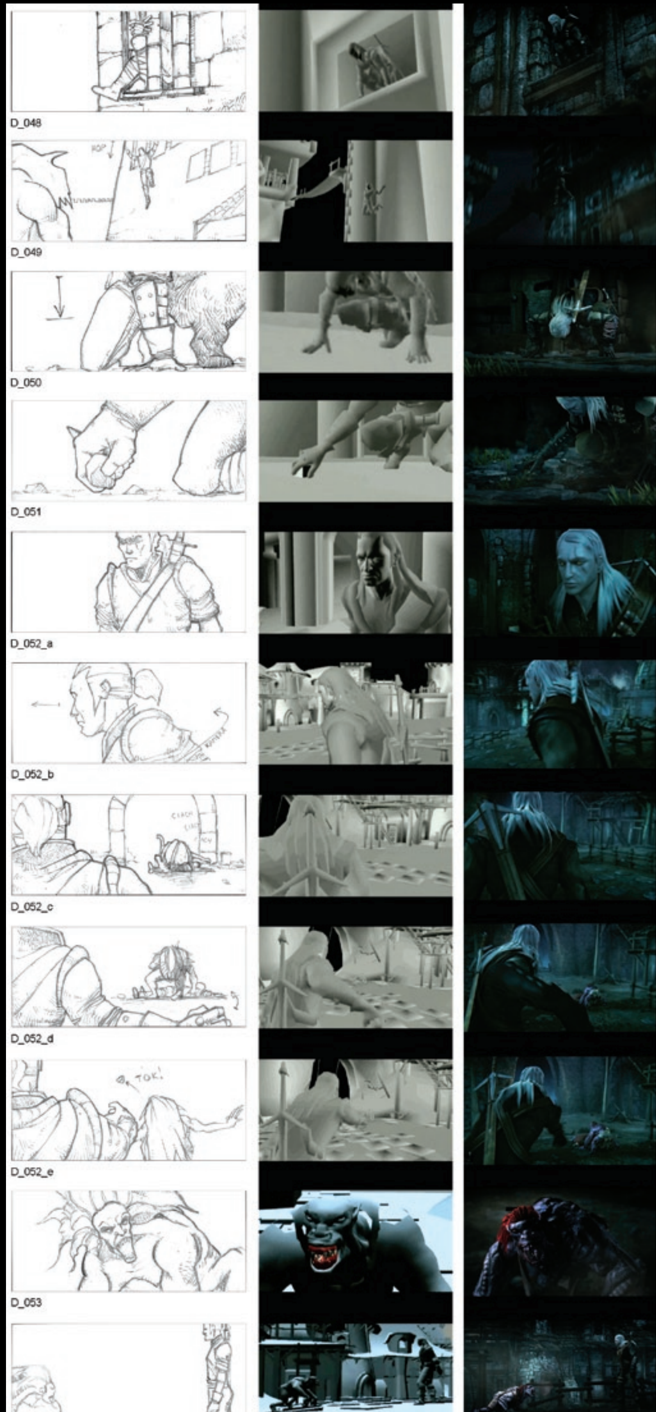
  

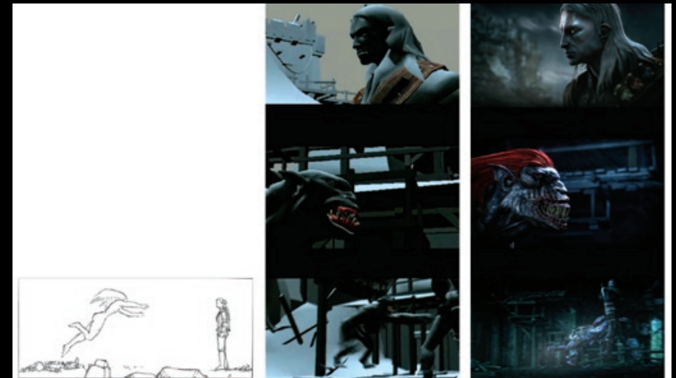
C_039

C_041





This storyboard compares shots in the animatic of the game introduction with corresponding images of the film in its final form.


F_080_a





F_080_b





F_081





F_082_a





F_082_b





F_083



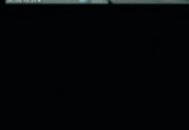


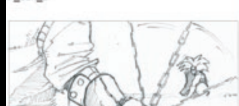
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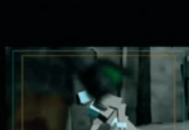




F_084_b





F_084_c





F_085









F_087





F_088



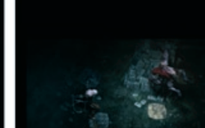


F_089





F_090


F_091_a



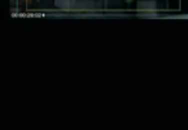


F_091_b





F_092_a



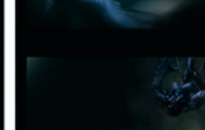


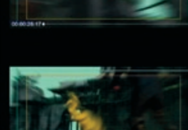
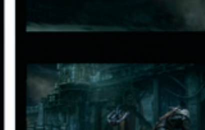
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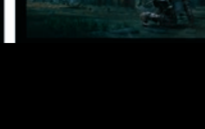




F_093





PLATIGE IMAGE : CINEMATICS

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SOUND FX
Adam Skorupa

EDIT
Andrzej Dąbrowski



CD PROJEKT RED



Producing The Witcher *has been an extraordinary experience. With the game nearly complete, we can see the result of our efforts. To me, the process of working on* The Witcher *was like exploring, like sailing out onto unknown waters.*

We progressed out of passion for exploration and enthusiasm for Sapkowski's prose, computer games and traditional RPGs. We knew little of the sea before us: inexperienced, we were a bit mad to venture out.



For many this adventure has lasted four years. We supported each other during storms and debated heatedly when the weather turned fair. We evaded most of the reefs on our way, by luck or by working long hours. Passion and madness – these qualities best describe our team. Making The Witcher *has been a fascinating experience chiefly because of those involved.*

Jacek Brzeziński
Project Lead, *The Witcher*















POSTERS

The posters reprinted in this section promoted the game throughout its production. They were designed to reveal our protagonist while showing gamers interested in *The Witcher* what to expect.






...For Some it is
Just a Job







































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